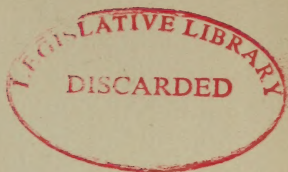


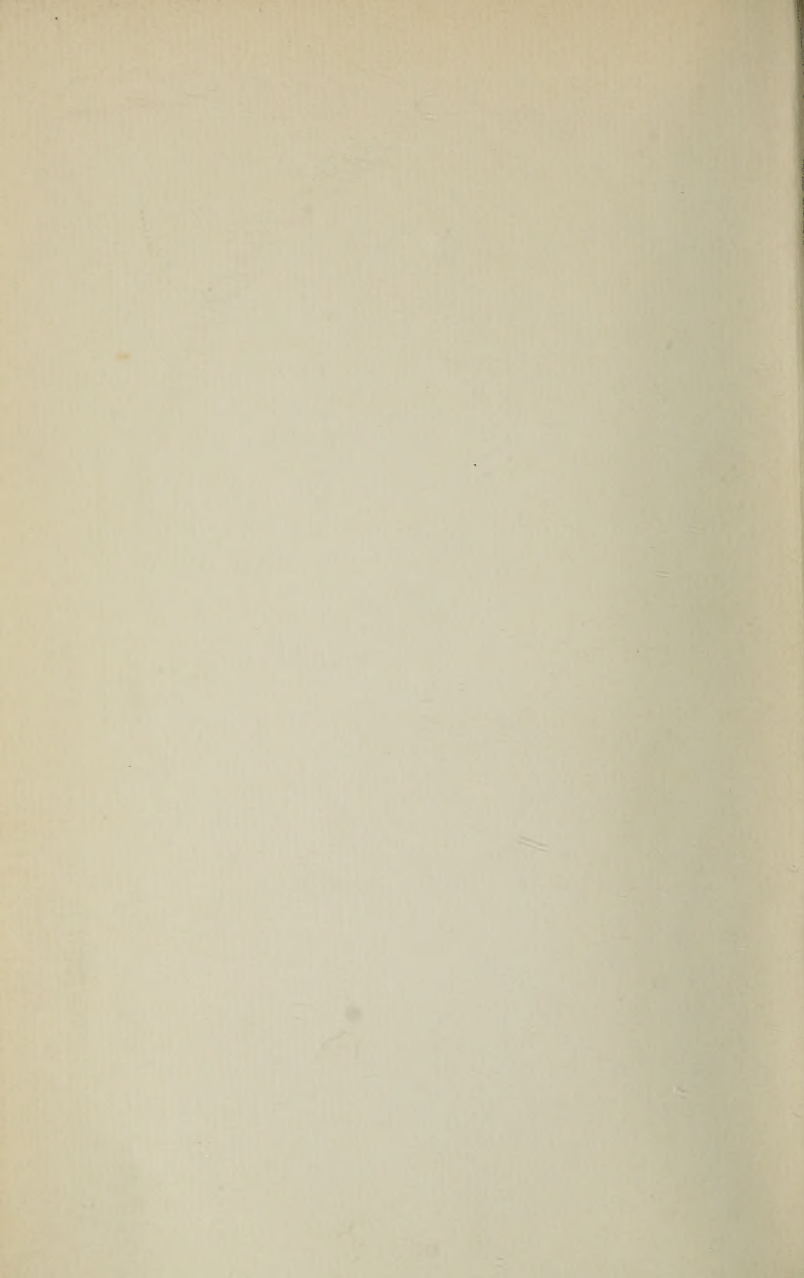


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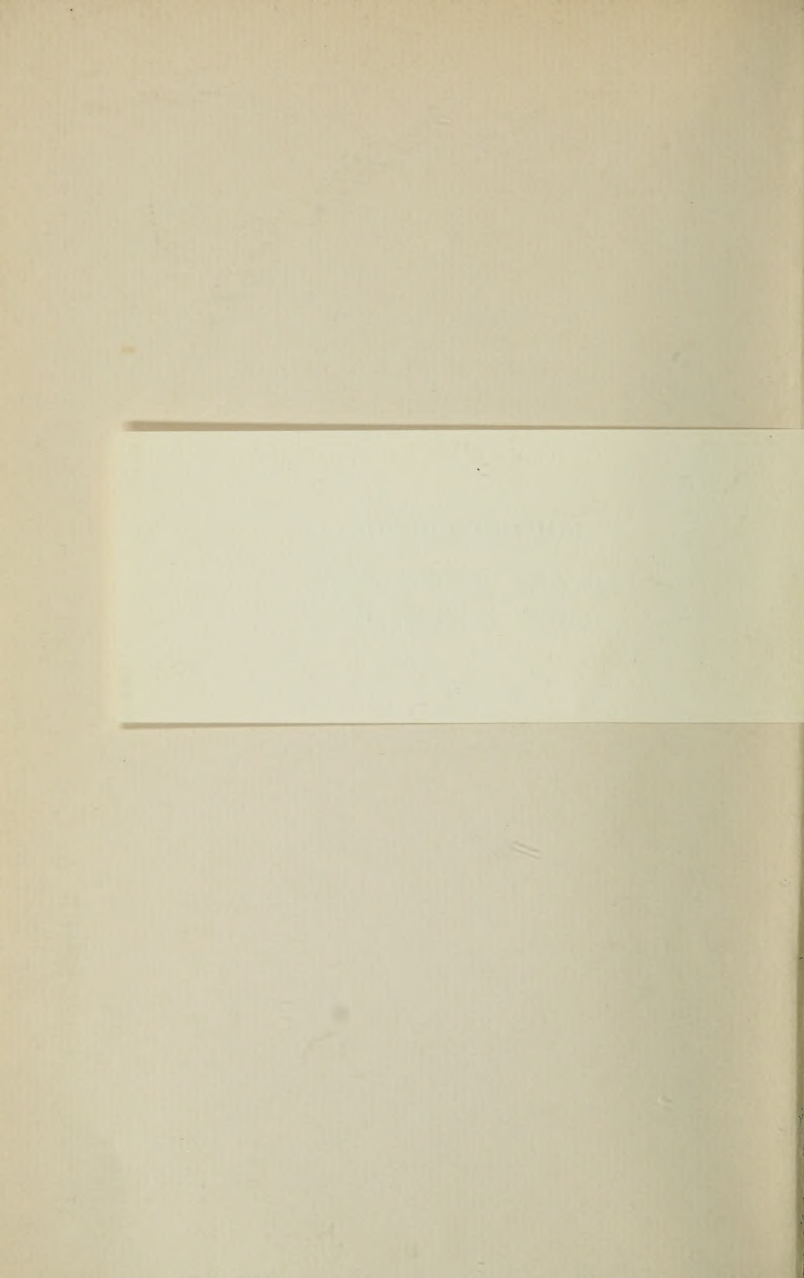


EXTRACTS FROM A SUPPLEMENTARY
LETTER FROM THE EDITOR
TO HIS READERS

LIMITED EDITION.

250 *copies on Small Paper.*

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EXTRACTS FROM A SUPPLEMENTARY
LETTER FROM THE ILLINOIS.

By MORRIS BIRKBECK.

LETTERS FROM THE LEXINGTON AND
THE ILLINOIS.

By RICHARD FLOWER.

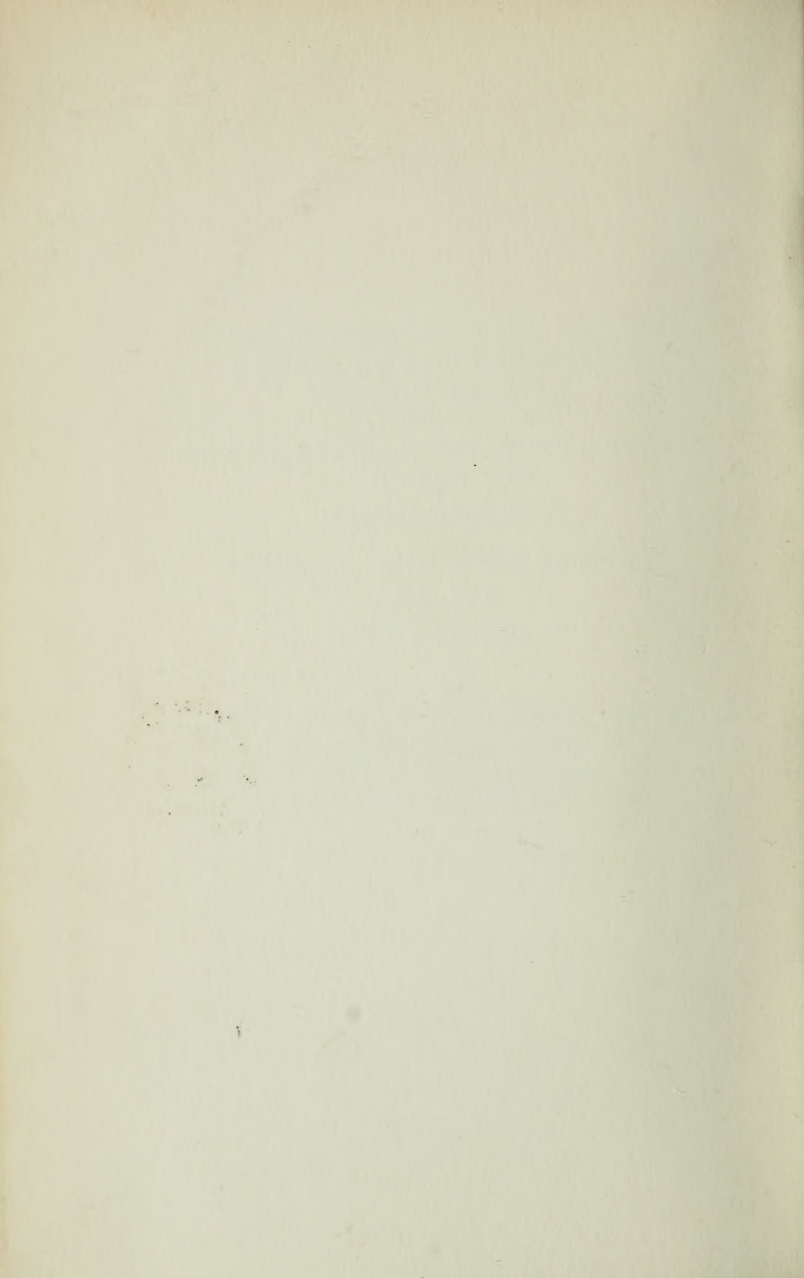
LETTERS FROM THE ILLINOIS,
1820, 1821.

By RICHARD FLOWER.

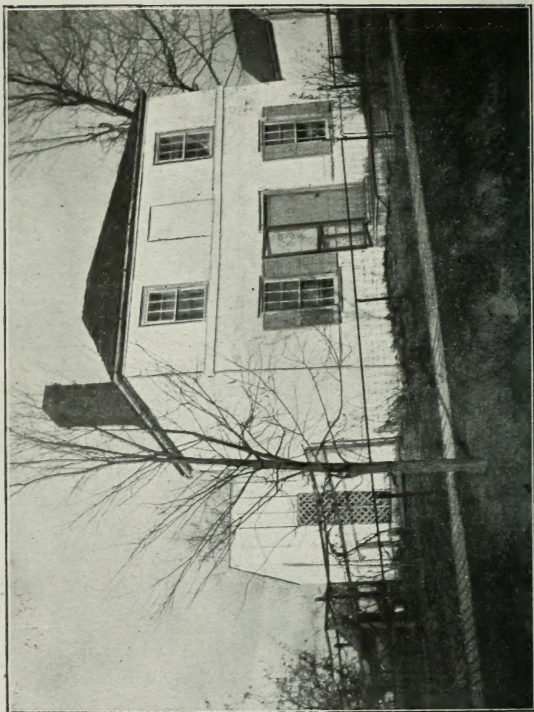
WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

By EDWIN ERLE SPARKS, PH.D.,

*Professor of American History and Dean of University College in
the University of Chicago.*







ENGLISH COLONY HOUSE AT ALBION, ILLINOIS.



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THE
ENGLISH SETTLEMENT
IN THE
ILLINOIS.

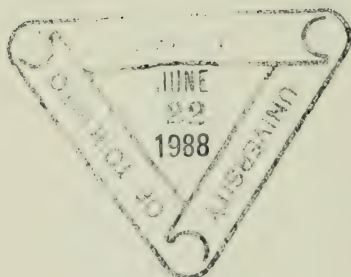
REPRINTS OF
THREE RARE TRACTS ON THE
ILLINOIS COUNTRY.

*WITH MAP AND A VIEW OF A BRITISH COLONY
HOUSE AT ALBION.*

EDITED
WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES
BY
EDWIN ERLE SPARKS, PH.D.,
*Professor of American History,
University of Chicago.*

LONDON:
THE MUSEUM BOOK STORE,
43, MUSEUM STREET, W.C.,
AND
THE TORCH PRESS,
CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA.
1907.





INTRODUCTION.



THIS group of interesting pamphlets belongs to the reconstruction period of European history, when the nations were attempting to resume their normal economic relations, after twenty years of almost continuous war. In England it was hoped that the caging of Napoleon and a cessation of hostilities would bring a freedom from anxiety, a return of prosperity and a general happiness. The result was precisely contrary. In their ensuing unfortunate condition the people failed to appreciate the length of time necessary to resume former relations. They blamed all their miseries upon government, and demanded various reforms. While the common classes formed mobs to protest against the price of bread, the better informed organized Hampden Clubs to secure a repeal of the Corn Laws and the

extension of manhood suffrage. Even the uncertain relation of England to the Holy Alliance was made a subject of suspicion and attack by the reformers.

Under such disturbances many people contemplated seeking a new home beyond the ocean, where taxes would be lower, tithes unknown, paid officials fewer, and, presumably, means of making a livelihood easier. In a preface to Hulme's "Journal of a Tour in the Western Countries of America," William Cobbett, the reformer, describes Hulme as one of many who, "having something to be robbed of, and wishing to preserve it, and looking toward America as a place of refuge from the Borough-mongers and the Holy Alliance," alienated themselves to that land. Hulme himself ascribes his migration to the same causes. "I saw that, of whatever I might be able to give to my children, as well as of what they might be able to earn, more than one-half would be taken away to feed pensioned Lords and Ladies, Soldiers

to shoot at us, Parsons to persecute us, and Fundholders who had lent their money to be applied to purposes of enslaving us."

To these emigrants the United States of America presented a kinship of blood and a similarity of language and institutions which robbed the transplanting of many of its terrors. The public lands offered in fee simple by the United States Government at a price of about two dollars an acre on easy terms, assured each emigrant a home, while the restrictive land laws prevented a foreign landlord system. For mutual protection a number of families would sometimes unite and select adjacent lands in the New World, thus forming a kind of colony. Having acquired more land than they could cultivate, and desiring to augment their numbers, they frequently sent home letters setting forth the fertility of the soil and salubrity of climate of their new homes. Between these various colonies a rivalry soon arose, each taking every occasion to

establish its advantages against the disadvantages of the others. English colonies were planted in eastern Pennsylvania along the Susquehanna River; in Long Island, New York; in the southern portion of the State of Indiana, and in south-eastern Illinois. From the latter were written the pamphlets by Birkbeck and Flower herein printed.

Morris Birkbeck was born at Wanborough, in Surrey, in 1763, of Quaker ancestry. Associated with him was George Flower, near twenty years his junior, son of a Dissenter named Richard Flower. Desiring to escape the authority of the Established Church, Birkbeck sent out the younger Flower in 1816 to arrange for the purchase of some sixteen thousand acres of public land in what was known as "the Illinois country." In 1818 it became the State of Illinois. One year later, Birkbeck brought his four children to his purchase, and Flower returned to England for his family.

Upon arriving at his tract of land, situated in south-eastern Illinois between the Great and Little Wabash rivers, Birkbeck selected a bit of rising ground in a large prairie for his residence. He described the building as made of frame filled with brick, and containing thirteen rooms and two cellars. Travellers who visited him called it a cabin. He intended it to be a manor house for a great estate, similar to the one he had left in Surrey. Two miles to the eastward he laid out a village which he called Albion. Here were to be gathered the artisans and tradesmen necessary for his establishment. Very soon the prairie in which Wanborough and Albion were located became known locally as "English Prairie."

Birkbeck had kept careful notes of the events of his migration, and these he sent back with Flower to England, where they appeared as "Notes on a Journey in America from the Coast of Virginia to Illinois." They were later supplemented by a collection of



"Letters" written by Birkbeck from Illinois. Both pamphlets were intended to persuade others to remove to the English Prairie. Birkbeck's statements were at once questioned by William Cobbett, who had exiled himself to America and had chosen a home on Long Island near the city of New York. He was interested in a colony at that point. Birkbeck's reply to Cobbett forms the first pamphlet printed in this collection. Cobbett's attack may be found in his complete works.

George Flower, in 1818, brought over his father and several members of his family, having previously married a ward of Birkbeck. He claimed that Birkbeck had made no effort in his absence to secure for him a home. Upon arriving at Albion he began the construction of a residence which he called "Park House." While the house was building, the father, Richard Flower, and the family tarried in Lexington, the chief city of the State of Kentucky. During this period the father began the series of "Letters from

Lexington and the Illinois," which make up the second pamphlet of this reprint. In it, he also pays his respects to Mr. Cobbett.

After removing to the Park House, Albion, Richard Flower continued his efforts in behalf of the English Settlement by writing the "Letters from the Illinois," which form the third of this collection of pamphlets. In England they were edited by Richard's younger brother, Benjamin, who prepared notes and wrote a preface under the initials "B. F."

The failure of the English settlements in Illinois was due not alone to the poor quality of the soil in that part of the State and the hindrance from drought before deep artesian wells were driven. Birkbeck displayed a haughty bearing and lordly air in ill keeping with his democratic surroundings. He was soon dubbed "the Emperor of the Prairie." Difficulties of finding "servants" among his American neighbours interfered with his establishment. The case of Bid-
dy,

as related by Flower, was not singular. Differences arose between Birkbeck and George Flower, caused, it was said, by the marriage of Flower to a ward of Birkbeck, whom the latter wished to make his second spouse. Vaux, Woods and other travellers mention this quarrel as growing into a feud between the settlements at Wanborough and Albion, and greatly injuring the growth of each. In 1825 Birkbeck was drowned in crossing a stream while making a visit to Robert Owen at his community of Harmony. George Flower resided in Illinois until 1862, leaving a "History of the English Settlements in Edward's County, Illinois." (Chicago: 1862. Chicago Hist. Soc. Publications, X.)

Woods described Wanborough in 1822 as containing twenty-five cabins, a tavern, a store or two, and the shops of various craftsmen. To these settlers Birkbeck had sold lots of five acres, each laid out in a village. In Albion, Woods saw about twenty cabins,

two taverns, a church, a market house, and two stores, with a smith and other artisans. Other English settlers were scattered about the prairie in single cabins. This was the period of greatest English supremacy. Many settlers returned to England disheartened. American settlers came in, and the English predominance was soon lost. Birkbeck's children left Illinois after his death.

Wanborough has disappeared from the modern map. Albion is a small village (population in 1900, 1,162), differing in nowise from neighbouring villages along the single line of railway which passes through it. A very few descendants of the English settlers are yet to be found. Occasionally a square solid brick house survives to mark the English occupancy. On the prairie, where games of cricket were played to keep in memory Catharine Hill fair in old Guildford, now can be seen only fields of corn or orchards of fruit trees. Typical American farms and farm houses are scattered over the old English

prairie which Birkbeck hoped to make into an American manor. Scarcely a tradition remains of the man of whom Vaux said, "No man since Columbus has done so much towards peopling America as Mr. Birkbeck."

EXTRACTS

FROM

A SUPPLEMENTARY LETTER

FROM THE

ILLINOIS;

AN

Address to British Emigrants;

AND

A REPLY

TO

THE REMARKS

OF

WILLIAM COBBETT, Esq.

BY

MORRIS BIRKBECK.



Second Edition.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JAMES RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY.

MDCCCXIX.



EXTRACTS

FROM A

SUPPLEMENTARY LETTER

FROM

THE ILLINOIS. (a)

Sent to England for Publication, January 31, 1819.



THE interest which has been excited by the voluntary expatriation of an obscure individual shows, that the thing itself is of importance, when considered in connection with its causes. The exposure of these causes has been imputed to me as an act of hostility to my native country, by those, who identify the government with the people. This imputation is unjust and extremely painful; for, though no longer a subject of the British Government, I am bound to my countrymen by ties of affection, to be broken by that stroke only,

which must sever me from all the interests of mortality. But I make no apology. Hoping to do good, it became my duty to publish: and who apologises for the performance of a duty?

In my solicitude for the well-being of our colony, I have deprecated the formalities practised in *lieu* of Religion. I have therefore been deemed a foe to Religion—that bond which connects the soul of man with the Supreme Intelligence, “in whom we live, and move, and have our being.” It is the love of God increasing our good will toward each other. It is a principle of action aiding the moral sense: a divine sentiment, impelling us to pursuits which reason approves, and restraining us from evil. If I have written in disparagement of this principle, I plead guilty.

It has been reported in the Eastern States, that all our bright prospects have vanished, and that we have been visited by every calamity, physical and moral: by famine, disease, and strife: that the sound have been too few to nurse the sick, and the living scarcely able to bury the

dead: and that we are an immoral and licentious crew, tearing each other by incessant broils and contention. On the contrary, we have had an abundant supply of all the necessities of life, and have experienced no extraordinary visitations of disease or mortality. And as to dissensions and immorality, if instances of the former have occurred, it is because the latter is the object of our abhorrence.

On the whole, we are prosperous, far beyond my own expectations. With regard to pecuniary success, the capitalist is commencing his operations, or looking around him undecided as to the course he shall pursue, but the labourer has *made an establishment*. It is not with him as with the capitalist, a state of hope merely, from good prospects; but of enjoyment, from good possessions. Numbers of this class, and of mechanics, have already realized their little freeholds, and are building cabins for themselves. The fruits of their labour are not squandered in dissipation and excess, because they have higher objects, and considering their former depressed condition, it is astonishing

to me, as it is honourable to them, that they betray no arrogance in their advance to independence.

Unfortunately for the early domestic arrangements of all classes, the female departments must remain vacant for a time, or scantily supplied. We have received large importations of British goods by way of New Orleans. (*b*) This our natural channel of intercourse with Europe is at present greatly obstructed by the irregularities and impositions attending the steam boat navigation, arising from the want of due competition. One hundred and ten dollars are paid for a passage from New Orleans to Shawnee Town (*c*), and from four and a half to six cents per pound for merchandize. But a steam boat of seven hundred tons burthen is building at Louisville, to ply between that place and New Orleans, besides numbers of smaller burthen now on the stocks, to the amount I understand of nearly a hundred; this constitutes an unprecedented demand for ship carpenters; and it is expected with confidence, that the rates of freight on the Mississippi and Ohio will be reduced one

half the next summer. Packages sent from England should be strong, if possible water tight, and of moderate weight, say two hundred pounds. The weight of each package should be fairly marked on it. And it should be especially remembered by all, who make shipments to this country, that unless an invoice accompanies the goods, specifying the contents and value of each package, enormous expense and damage will be incurred. New articles, although not designed for sale, are liable to a duty of from sixteen and a half to thirty-three per cent. on the original cost, but articles which have been used are admitted duty free.

In general, I think it better to bring letters of credit, or other convertible funds, than merchandize. Bedding, apparel, kitchen utensils and other tools, things which are in immediate requisition on arrival, should accompany the settler.

An erroneous opinion has generally prevailed, both in England and the Eastern States, that all prairies partake more or less of the nature of swamps: that they are, in fact, morasses too wet for the

growth of timber. Whereas, in this country, prairies frequently occupy the highest, the driest, and generally the most fertile portions of the surface, river bottoms excepted. Why one portion of the Earth's surface, when in a state of nature, should be covered with trees, and another portion with herbage only: why prairies should prevail from the Wabush westward, and Dup forests to the east: why in the south-east of Europe and in South America there should be vast regions, *ubi nulla campis arbor æstiva recreatur aura*, not producing tree or shrub, is a problem yet to be solved. Or, is the forest a more *natural* covering than the green turf? Let that point be first decided. The *happiest* for man is a due proportion of each, as is the case in the country we have chosen. It is only of late that this description of land has attracted the notice of the Americans, and its value is as yet but imperfectly appreciated. I am persuaded, that my countrymen will find it peculiarly adapted to their habits, and I have therefore taken pains to lay before them its advantages. That my motives

should have been misconstrued by some, neither surprises nor offends me. The substantial good, that has already been effected, affords ample compensation. In the statements I have published, I see little to correct, as far as my observation and experience have now proceeded, excepting, that, in my view of the profits of cultivation to early settlers, I have not made sufficient allowance *in time* for the innumerable delays and disappointments inseparable from new undertakings in a new country. A year of preparatory and unproductive exertion should be added to the debtor side of the account at the outset.

Our precursors of the hunting tribe, as I anticipated, are now "clearing out" in good earnest: selling their little "improvements," and moving forward into the wilderness. There is nothing congenial in their habits with those of our people; yet, greatly to the honour of both, no quarrels of any importance have occurred (*d*).

AN
ADDRESS
TO
BRITISH EMIGRANTS
ARRIVING IN
THE EASTERN STATES.

Published in New York.



English Prairie (e), July 13, 1819.

My Friends and Countrymen ;

FOR your service I exhibited, in two publications, an outline of the process of emigration, from its commencement up to the final settlement.

My first opinion of this, the spot of our choice, and the reasoning on which that choice was grounded, are before you, and sufficient time has elapsed to try those opinions by the test of experience, by

which they are confirmed in every important particular. I showed you my own track through the gloomy forest into a delightful country, better prepared for an abode by the hand of nature than the heavy woods by half a century of labour. I built me a cabin, and "belayed a road to it;" for it was my ambition to be surrounded by my old friends and neighbours. In this too I am gratified, and we are contented with our allotment, both as to our present state and future prospects.

This small district, which two years ago was nearly without inhabitants, contains a thriving population of from six to seven hundred persons. We have been blessed with health most unusual for a new settlement, or for any settlement of equal numbers in any country: and no doubt is entertained by us, or by any judicious observer, of its salubrity. We have several wells of excellent water, and many more are in progress. Our soil is fertile beyond my own expectation; but our exertions have hitherto been chiefly directed to the permanent objects of building and fencing, of which much has already been done.

We have however collected a stock of hogs and cattle; and I think more acres of corn are now growing than there are individuals in the settlement.

I have been informed, that the active pen of Mr. Cobbett has been borrowed by certain land speculators to divert your course from the western country to a settlement in the back woods of Pennsylvania, on the Susquehannah, one hundred and seventy miles north-west of Philadelphia (*f*). I have not yet been so fortunate as to meet with the publication. Report says, that he holds me out as a man of infirm judgment, and has descended so far as to throw a doubt on my veracity; the latter I can hardly credit; but however that may be, the question, both as regards my judgment and veracity in this instance, is decided, and in my favour, on the incontrovertible evidence of fact. The Susquehannah may, for aught I know, be quite eligible for you; but unfair means taken by the promoters of any undertaking to depress a competitor, shakes, and ought to destroy all confidence in their honour and truth. I have just received a publi-

cation on this subject by a Dr. Johnson, who, by misapplication of partial extracts and dishonest comments, has laboured to show that this country is not such as I have stated it to be; but that I have chosen a bad situation, and described it as a good one. This gives me a mean opinion of Dr. Johnson.

But it is the *interest* of these speculators to fix you on their lands, and their proposals may be worth your attention; therefore, as the distance is comparatively small from the eastern ports, I advise you to examine the thing for yourselves, or at least to obtain an account of it through honest hands. If you are poor, I would recommend you to find out some of the Susquehannah proprietors, who may possibly undertake to pay the charges of a journey thither, should you find Dr. Johnson's favourable report as false as I know his unfavourable to be. I hear of advertisements in the daily papers, inviting settlers; but why do annual thousands of New York and Pennsylvanian farmers *pass* these eligible settlements at their own doors, and make their way into the west,

even as far as this place? I feel no anxiety as to the peopling of this neighbourhood; our prosperity is out of the reach of Mr. Cobbett or Dr. Johnson; but I think it right to offer these hints to your attention.

It would be well for you to inform yourselves what the Emigrant Society consists of, which professes so much good will towards you.

The Preface to Dr. Johnson's book is called an address to you from this Society, but it is not authenticated either by signature or date.

It is probable, that the owners of the lands in question are the "Emigrant Society;" if so, you will understand the whole affair.

M. BIRKBECK.

A
LETTER
TO
WILLIAM COBBETT, ESQ.
IN
REPLY
TO
HIS REMARKS
ON
MR. BIRKBECK'S TWO PUBLICATIONS.

Wanborough English Prairie, July 31, 1819.

SIR;

THE LETTERS, in which you have done me the honour of noticing my two publications on this country, have only reached my hand this day, and that by *accident*; a circumstance, which will account to you for the tardiness of my Reply. Indeed, were it not for the purpose of correcting some passages where

my veracity seems to be the point at issue, I should not have considered any reply needful.

You, Sir, are an eminent caricaturist, and have exercised your talent on this occasion, as you have on others innumerable, with considerable effect. But your success is not to be envied; for the moment the exaggeration is discovered, the effect ceases, and your credit as an honest writer suffers in proportion.

You have given the Public your first year's history, and I have described things as I went along, to the best of my judgment. In your mode you have the advantage of *following* your experience, and are of course perfectly safe, if you keep good hold of your pen. I have not, however, much to regret, "as my anticipations have proved correct in every important particular, with one exception, and that is in regard to time." The delays and disappointments at the commencement of a settlement, remote from all old establishments, consume more time than had entered into my calculations. Of this error I have taken due care to apprise the

Public through various channels: but with the general correctness of the result, in other respects, I am quite satisfied.

I shall now recal your attention to some paragraphs in your Letters, placing the numbers in the margin.

591. You have seen prairies in Canada, and you have seen *loyalists from Connecticut* (*g*) well settled on those prairies. They were surrounded by British soldiers, who were "by no means *shy*;" who "drank their coffee and grog by gallons, and ate their fowls, pigs, sausages, and sweetmeats by wheelbarrow loads," and "still they sighed for Connecticut." They had "beautiful corn fields," and were as "happy as people could be as to ease and plenty;" still they were dissatisfied, notwithstanding the efforts of yourself and your comrades to console them. But since you have seen my publications you have discovered, that they were wretched because it was on *prairies* they were settled. And it is thus that you "write down" the prairies of Illinois. But, Sir, the prairies of Illinois are as I have described them, rich, beautiful, healthy; and we, who are

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settled on them, are not dissatisfied, or sighing even for Old England: on the contrary, contented ourselves, we are anxious to induce those whom we love best to follow our example.

576 to 579. Far from being a general declaimer in favour of emigration, I would *dissuade* persons, whose dispositions or circumstances unfit them for it; and almost in the words which you have unconsciously adopted. Emigration you allow to be good for some; of this your own example is an evidence. I thought it good for *me*; and published my case, because I knew many, who were in a similar condition, and I wished for society. The dangers and difficulties, which we overcame so easily in theory, have not proved more formidable in fact; and we are now in *possession* of those "beautiful meadows," which were to reward our toil, and our "fine freehold domain" lies smiling around us. Thus the experiment has succeeded.

580, 581. The quotation from my Preface, in the first of these paragraphs, is, with its context, as follows:—

“There are, however, many of the restless, whom this prescription would suit but badly. If low indulgence, or unsated avarice, have soured their tempers, it is not in a transfer from the old establishments of society to the silent waste, where it scarcely is begun, that they will find a cure. Envy or disappointed ambition—have these disgusted them with the world? The wilds of Illinois will yield no repose to their perturbed spirits. The fiends will migrate with them.

“As little would I encourage the emigration of the tribe of *grumblers*, people who are petulant and discontented under the every-day evils of life. Life has its petty miseries in all situations and climates; to be mitigated or cured by the continual efforts of an elastic spirit; or to be borne, if incurable, with cheerful patience. But the peevish emigrant is perpetually comparing the *comforts* he has quitted, but never could enjoy, with the *privations* of his new allotment. He overlooks the present good, and broods over the evil with habitual perverseness; whilst in his recollection of the past he dwells on the good

only. Such people are always bad associates, but they are an especial nuisance in an infant colony."

Now this was plainly addressed to the tribe of *grumblers*, whom I left *behind* me in England, earnestly exhorting them to remain there. In your comment I find them, to my astonishment, placed *by my side*, and you gravely chiding me for treating my "wailing neighbours" with too much asperity of language!

582. Then you proceed to caricature these unfortunate settlers under their first difficulties, and a woful picture you make of it. Fixed as you are to the very selvedge of this country, your *recollections* of Canadian prairies, and their hospitable inhabitants, might have given your sketch a different, and a truer character. You allow the grumblers "whiskey and pure water," but where are the "wheelbarrow loads of fowls, and pigs, and sausages, and sweetmeats?" You saw "the shed" *in Canada* succeeded by a "log house," and that by a "frame house;" and in *Canada* "they were as happy" as ease and plenty could make them. But *here* the shed re-

mains a shed: all is "misery at present and despair of the future!" "The apothecary's shop is a hundred miles off, and a doctor nowhere;" whereas a doctor *might* be of the party: and our *family medicines* are the standing jest of your brother satirists of the East. In fact, we *have* a gentleman of that profession, highly esteemed by us, and exceeded by few in his qualifications: he has, however, almost nothing to do; and we sometimes fear lest he should be compelled to quit us—for no other reason.

585 and 586. Why should you talk of our "living without *bread* for months," where wheat is to be bought at a dollar per bushel, and flour at five or six dollars per barrel? And why "without *beer*," where it is an article of common consumption? If you are ignorant of these matters, why do you mention them? Not for the *instruction* of your readers, certainly.

We are not "cut off from all intercourse with, and hope of hearing from our relations and friends;" but we are here, a *colony* of relations and friends, and old neighbours, who are constantly hearing of

and from the connections we have left. A letter is a sort of common property, from the numbers who are interested in its contents. Friends, who used to visit at the distance of twenty or thirty, or a hundred miles, are here within an easy walk. There are neither "the seeds" nor the *fruits* "of discontent" in our plan. We help each other cordially, and feel the most friendly interest in each other's prosperity. We contribute to each other's enjoyment, and we have few causes of jealousy. This is the prevailing character of our social band. We have much friendly society, and every coming month gives us an accession.

594. You say, that my ignorance of the Atlantic States is my only apology for saying, that "*the Americans have no mutton fit to eat,*" and "*regard it only as a thing fit for dogs.*" Now, Sir, I have not made so foolish an assertion, and therefore have no need of an apology. When you have referred to page 75 of the English edition of my Notes, or 98 of the American, for what I have *really* said on this subject, where will *you* find an apology?

Perhaps you will say, that you "first practised a deceit on yourself and then upon others;" as I presume to be the case where you give us an instance of my general inaccuracy with regard to prices, that "salt will soon be at *one quarter* of a dollar per bushel." (*h*) "And thus" you observe, "it goes all through." I have mentioned the price of salt (page 126 of the Journey) at three quarters sterling; and at page 75 of the Letters, I made the following observation.

"The demand for all the necessaries of life increases so rapidly, that the supply does not always keep pace with it; and those who want money or foresight are sometimes compelled to pay high prices. High prices stimulate the producer, supply is increased, and the articles soon recover their due level, until a similar cause operates in again occasioning a temporary scarcity. Thus salt, which might be *afforded* at seventy-five cents per bushel, now sells at two dollars and upwards." "And thus" say I, "it goes all through!"

604, 605, 606. The estimate for farm

buildings was made from *correct working plans*; and the prices such as I was then contracting for and have since paid. I am now a competent judge of these matters from experience, and I repeat, that a house exceedingly convenient and comfortable, together with the requisite farm buildings, including (613) *corn cribs*, may be executed well for one thousand five hundred dollars. Really Sir, you must allow me to understand this one particular subject better than yourself, or the building carpenter "two miles from New York."

608. The glorious occasion of triumph over my simple statement is yet behind. "One thousand eight hundred rods of line fence for one hundred and fifty dollars!" Here your eagerness to "write me down" (you understand the application of the phrase), has hurried you *beyond* a misplaced joke, as you will perceive.

I went to Basseron Prairie, fifty miles off, to see a young hedge of honey locust: (*i*) it was promising: I projected such a fence for our inclosures, by sowing the seed on

the banks ; and the expense will be greatly within one hundred and fifty dollars. On referring to my memorandum, I find that five pecks of honey locust seed, which is something smaller than a pea, will plant one thousand eight hundred rods, at two inches apart.

Dollars.

The seed may cost, collecting, one dollar per peck 5

Which leaves twenty-nine dollars per peck for planting 145

Dollars 150

No levelling of banks is required ; it is performed by the ditchers as part of their contract ; and few or no weeds grow on the banks for two years. "So great a liberty with truth," you say, "never was taken by any mortal being ;" and having made the discovery, you are "in great haste to conclude" your letter *to me, not to afford me* an early opportunity of correcting it, but that your "son William might take it *to England* with him," (par. 620), and publish it there, *six months* before I could hear of it.

“The minds of you gentlemen that cross the Alleghany seem to expand, as it were to correspond with the extent of horizon that opens to your view; but I can assure you, that if you were to talk to a farmer on this side of the mountains, of a field of corn of a hundred acres during the first year of a settlement, with grassy land, and hands scarce, you would frighten him into a third day ague.” Notwithstanding the grateful horrors which assail you on this occasion, the thing is feasible. The son of an old neighbour of yours, a Hampshire farmer, has now growing on prairie land, “the first year,” and under good husbandry, nearly that quantity of very promising Indian corn.

611 to 615. You talk of dunging and ploughing, and harvesting and sowing wheat, and of gathering corn, and carrying off four hundred waggon loads of corn stalks, as of work to be performed within thirty days, and then alarm your readers with “a *battalion* of forty horse and fifty foot” to accomplish it. Whereas dunging may be done at any time; wheat harvest is in June or July; wheat sowing in September; corn gathering in October and No-

vember, and the stalks are burnt on the spot. Now, if fifty men and forty horses will perform this in thirty days, ten men and eight horses will do it in one hundred and fifty days! Pray, Sir, who is the *simpleton*? You shall speak for yourself.

614. "However, crops come stumbling on him so fast, that he must struggle hard not to get stifled in his own superabundance. He has now got two hundred acres of corn, and one hundred acres of wheat, which latter he has indeed had one year before. Oh madness! But to proceed. The hands to get in these crops, and to sow the wheat, first taking away two hundred acres of *English coppice* in stalks, will, with the *dunging* for the wheat (for *dunging*, to our surprise, is wanted), require at least *fifty good men*, and *forty good horses or oxen*, for *thirty days*. Faith, when farmer Simpleton sees all this (in his *dreams* I mean), he will think himself a farmer of the rank of Job, before Satan beset that example of patience, so worthy of imitation, and so seldom imitated."

615. "Well, but Simpleton must bustle

to *get in* his wheat. *In*, indeed; what can *cover* it but the canopy of Heaven? A barn! It will, at two English waggon loads of sheaves to an acre, require a barn a hundred feet long, fifty feet wide, and twenty-three feet high up to the eaves; and this barn, with two proper floors, will cost more than seven thousand dollars. He will put it in stacks; let him add six men to his batallion, then. He will *thresh it in the field*; let him add ten more men, &c." What a rhodomontade is here! Why, Sir, there have grown *this year*, on a prairie, a few miles south of us, *four hundred acres of wheat*, besides spring grain; and there are now growing *seven hundred acres* of magnificent Indian corn. The *entire buildings*, to which this produce appertains, might, I believe, be erected for fifteen hundred dollars; whilst you are crying out "*seven thousand dollars* for a barn!"

In the estimate of husbandry labour, I have given the regular prices of the nearest settled neighbourhood, from the information of many persons; and I conceive my own authority to be at least on a

par with yours on this subject, where our opportunities of knowing are equal. In this instance, I think I have the advantage of you. Should team labour, hereafter, exceed the rates I have adopted, it will be in consequence of an advance in the price of grain, affecting the credit side of the account in favour of the grower, in the proportion which the consumption of the teams bears to the entire produce.

617. "When I read in your Illinois Letters that you had *prepared* horses, ploughs, and other things, *for putting in a hundred acres of corn in the spring*, how I pitied you! I saw all your plagues, if you could not see them. I saw the grass choking your plants; the grubs eating them; and you fretting and turning from the sight with all the pangs of baffled, sanguine hope. I expected you to have *ten* bushels instead of *fifty* per acre. I saw your confusion, and participated in your mortification. From these feelings I was happily relieved by the Journal of our friend Hulme (*k*), who informs the world, and our countrymen in particular, that

you had not, *in July last, any corn at all growing.*"

618. "Thus it is to reckon one's chickens before they are hatched: and thus the Trans-alleghanian dream vanishes! You have been deceived. A warm heart, a lively imagination, and I know not what caprice about Republicanism, have led you into sanguine expectations and wrong conclusions." You are mistaken, Sir! *a warm heart, or a lively imagination, or Republican caprices,* had no concern with my ploughing, or letting it alone. I came to this place, a solitary settler, about eighteen months ago, but I was soon surrounded by neighbours. For their accommodation buildings were to be erected, wells to be dug, tools and materials of every kind, as well as provisions, to be collected from a distance. Every fresh arrival, in some way or other, put my team in requisition: thus the horses I had provided for ploughing were better employed. My hopes were not "baffled;" but I was engaged on more important matters; compensating me in

feeling as well as in fact, for being thus compelled to lay aside the plough for a season. In the mean time I proceeded with *permanent improvements*, of which I will give you a summary, to show you that our "Trans-alleghanian dream," as you are facetiously styling it, is a solid reality: for you will suppose that others have not been idle, and that all may not have been diverted from cultivation, as I have been.

I have built fifteen cabins with floors of plank, and mostly with *two* glazed windows each.

By the bye, you inform me, "and our countrymen in particular" (paragraph 627), that my own "log hut," which is a specimen of the rest, "is such as the free Negroes live in about here" (that is, about North Hampstead, Long Island); and "a hole it is," you say, "fit only for dogs, or hogs, or cattle. Worse it is than the Negro huts; for they have a bit of glass, but here there is none." Thus you perceive we have escaped from the dark smoky holes you had imagined us in, and that a cabin with two glazed windows is now the lowest order of our habitations.

But to proceed with my summary—I have built three stables, a corn crib, hog sties, carpenter's shops, a forge, and various other things. I have dug five wells, from eighteen to forty-five feet deep; made an excellent kitchen garden, and a good preparation for an orchard. I have also nearly finished a large house for my own family; great part of which is frame, filled in with *brick*. It contains thirteen rooms, and two cellars, walled and floored with bricks. There is also an ice house, and a smoke house. I have ploughed about seventy acres, partly twice, in preparation for wheat. I have made about eighteen hundred rods of ditch, four feet wide, and three deep, with a fence of four rails on the bank of a great part of it. Corn may be grown to greater advantage *after* these preparations than before them; and it is a course I would now recommend to others. So I have no "confessions to make;" and I bear your "decided condemnation of my publications" with more equanimity than you have predicted, because I am tolerably sure of the approval of every estimable person, who understands the

subject. In truth, Sir, I consider you on this occasion an object of pity rather than of anger; and it is with that feeling that I am obliged to inflict upon you one or two more quotations from your Letters, with my remarks.

Your 624th paragraph is as follows:—
 “It is of little consequence what wild schemes are formed and executed by men who have property enough to *carry them back*; but to invite men to go to the Illinois with *a few score of pounds* in their pockets, and to tell them, that they can become *farmers* with these pounds, appears to me to admit of no other apology than an unequivocal acknowledgment that the invitor is *mad*. Yet your Fifteenth Letter from the Illinois really contains such an invitation. This Letter is manifestly addressed to an *imaginary* person. It is clear that the correspondent is a *feigned*, or *supposed* being. The Letter is, I am sorry to say, I think, a mere trap to catch poor creatures with a few pounds in their pockets.” You then insert the whole of the letter, for which I thank you, as it

contains good advice, and may afford useful information to numbers, in the very teeth of your commentary. It is not an "imaginary," *Dear Sir*, whom I address in that Letter, but one with whose circumstances I am intimately acquainted; being a near relation by marriage. He is a good farmer, and singularly qualified, by skill and ability in manual labour, to accomplish all I proposed. He has moreover a most notable farmerly wife, and seven or eight fine children. *You* would detain such a man, with his family and his four hundred and fifty dollars, in Long Island, where your neighbour Judge Lawrence might sell him *one* acre for three hundred, build him a *hut* for one hundred and fifty, and employ him as a labourer afterwards. A horse laugh would hardly cover such a blunder as this, Mr. Cobbett! I call many a man "*Dear Sir*," whose hands have been hardened by severe labour; and when you honour *me* with the appellation, you do the like to a man, who was probably holding the plough or carrying the seed-lip whilst you were in

Canada "in your coat of bright red," administering consolation to the unfortunate exiles from Connecticut.

629. That two persons, opposite as we are in our habits and pursuits, should be guided by similar principles in the choice of a situation, would be strange indeed. A village on Long Island may be, I doubt not, as well adapted to your views as the beautiful prairie on which I am now writing is to mine; but the extravagance of the following passage seems indicative of a disturbed imagination.

"And I most solemnly declare, that I would sooner live the life of a gipsey in England, than be a settler, with less than five thousand pounds, in the Illinois."

You have posted me over England and America as *mad*; as a simpleton, a boaster; and, in one or two instances, as something worse. Your last Letter is dated, December 15, 1818, and I suppose was published about that time. Your book finds its *own* way to me seven months after, and in three more this Reply may meet the public eye in England. Thus you have the advantage of ten months.

But no matter; justice will overtake us at last; and there is a something in your character as a writer, which is greatly in favour of those whom you attempt to vilify.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

M. BIRKBECK.

THE END.

NOTES TO "EXTRACTS FROM A SUPPLEMENTARY LETTER," &c.

—:O:—

- (a) page 1, "The Illinois." This is a French spelling of "Illini," the name of a tribe of Indians which inhabited the prairies between Lake Michigan and the Ohio River. The white settlers applied the name to the region.
- (b) page 4, "New Orleans." The produce of the Mississippi Valley, carried down on flat-boats to New Orleans, was exchanged for foreign goods brought in ocean vessels which ascended the river to that port. This trade was gradually shifted to the Atlantic coast cities by the introduction of railways.
- (c) page 4, "Shawneetown." Named from the Shawnees, a tribe of Indians frequenting the region. It was the meeting place of the Ohio River and the Mississippi River Trade. In the decadence of River traffic, it has lost its early importance.
- (d) page 7, "have occurred." Before 1819, the date of this letter, the United States had inaugurated the policy of making treaties with the Indians for their lands and then removing them to new and vacant tracts west of the Mississippi River. The former massacres were not renewed until the whites began to trespass, in their westward movement, upon these assigned lands.
- (e) page 9, "English Prairie." The prairie in which the English settlements were located in Illinois. (See the Introduction.)
- (f) page 11, "Philadelphia." This was one of many attempts to promote colonies on the banks of the Susquehanna River.

- (g) page 17, "Loyalists from Connecticut." During the American War for Independence, more than 60,000 adherents of the King were driven from the thirteen colonies. Many of them migrated to Canada where they were granted lands.
- (h) page 23, "Price of salt." Salt was obtained by settlers along the Atlantic coast from boiling down the sea water. Before the saline deposits of the interior of the continent were discovered by boring, the advance of population was frequently hindered by the absence of salt.
- (i) page 24, "Hedge of honey locust." Many English settlers tried to introduce hedges in America, but the great extent of grounds to be inclosed and the force of the prevailing winds prevented any extensive use. Fences of wood or wire are employed instead.
- (k) page 29, "Friend Hulme." Hulme's "Journal of a Tour in the Western Countries of America" was not so severe upon the Birkbeck Colony as Cobbett, by distorting his language, makes him.

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"EXTRACTS FROM A SUPPLEMENTARY LETTER FROM THE ILLINOIS."

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LETTERS

FROM

LEXINGTON AND THE ILLINOIS,

CONTAINING A

BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE ENGLISH SETTLEMENT
IN THE LATTER TERRITORY,

AND A

REFUTATION OF THE MISREPRESENTATIONS
OF MR. COBBETT.

By RICHARD FLOWER.

London:

Printed by C. TEULON, 67, High Street, Whitechapel,
FOR J. RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY.

1819.

[*Price One Shilling.*]

PREFACE.

VARIOUS have been the reports respecting the *Illinois* Settlement, as they relate to the health of the climate, and the state of agriculture. The following Letters contain a simple narration of facts, the result of real observation, and an accurate survey; and will appear time enough to counteract the evil impression of false information by persons who have not been on the spot, or who appear to be interested in writing down the settlement.

As to the various reports about the state of health, they may be easily accounted for by comparing dates. On the arrival of emigrants in the summer of 1818, there were no cabins to shelter them from the heat of the sun by day, or from the dew, by night; neither a cow or pig for food, and scarcely a sufficiency for human subsistence to be procured; sickness to a considerable degree prevailed; but not more than three or four cases of death ensued. Since these inconveniences have

been overcome, few places, I believe I may say in the world, have been healthier than the English settlement in the Illinois.

I trust my friends and acquaintance in England, who interest themselves in our concerns, retain that good opinion of me, as to believe me incapable, from *any* motive, of laying before them inducements to emigrate to a station, where their existence or comfort would be likely to be threatened by diseases not prevalent in the same degree, at least, as in their own country.

A difference of opinion as to eastern or western settlements may prevail, as differences of opinion in England respecting Essex or Hertfordshire, which may be most healthy or profitable. I have only to request the attention of the reader to the facts I have stated.

The miscellaneous matter relative to the state of *Kentucky*, &c., will not, I hope, be found to be entirely destitute of interest to my old acquaintance in my native country.

LETTERS, &c.

LETTER I.

Lexington (a), June 25, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is natural you should have made those enquiries of me which you did in your last, and which it shall be my business to answer in their respective order.

1st.—How I like America in general, and Lexington in particular?

2nd.—Whether I have been disgusted with the American character and habits, as many have been? or whether I dare invite others to follow the course I have taken? but above all, how I, whose notions of liberty run so high, can endure to reside in a state where personal slavery exists.



Your first enquiry I am yet incompetent to answer to the extent you make it ; for, although I have travelled from New York to Pittsburgh,—down the Ohio to this place,—I have only had a sample of this extensive country ; and as you, my dear Sir, are in the habit of purchasing your goods by sample, and to my knowledge are often disappointed in the bulk, so you may not, perhaps, have a fair sample of entire America by the information I send you.

As to the great cities, they have no charms for me. You know, great cities in England, as places of residence, were the objects of my aversion ; and if there is any thing in those of New York and Philadelphia which I dislike, it is because they approximate so much to similar cities of England, without those raree shows which please both infants and children of larger growth, in London.

Here are few public buildings worthy of notice. No kings going to open Parliament with gilded coaches and cream-coloured horses, with a train of dragoons at their heels.—No Lord Mayor's show.—No Towers filled with royal tigers and lions.—No old castles which beautify the rural scenes of the country, whose melancholy history informs the curious traveller, that their foundation was bedded in

tyranny, and their superstructure the retainers of weeping prisoners, often of rank, as well as oppressed plebeians. No cathedrals or old churches to ornament the cities as well as the counties of England,—monuments of superstition when erected, and of injustice and oppression even to this day, having for their support tithe-proctors, and surveyors, continually obstructing the progress of agriculture, and exciting contentions and law suits to an extent for which all the preaching of the clergy of England cannot present an equivalent, or balance the evil produced by a worldly and avaricious priesthood.

America has none of these costly ornaments or beautiful monuments of oppression. I thank God she has not ; and hope she may be exempt from them, although strange to tell, I have found amongst both clergy and laity some few who wish for these degradations, and am even informed there are those who sigh after a religious establishment, and revenues besides those collected by the voluntary donations which flow from affectionate and religious hearers.

The episcopalian clergy in this country, have an enjoyment seldom known in England, that is, being chosen by the people, and sup-

ported according to their respective merits ; and it is my duty to add that episcopalians, as well as the ministers of most other sects, are in general "labourers worthy of their hire," virtuous in their conduct, exemplary in their deportment, exhibiting christianity in their every day conduct and intercourse with mankind, and enjoying the esteem of their congregations. There are none of those divines in the busy hive of America, which you know by the name of *dignified clergy*, partaking of the largest revenues, and doing the least possible service,—conduct which one would think must make their heart shudder at the thoughts of a judgment day! (b)

As to the travelling in America, you are already informed of its conveniences and inconveniences ; you dine at a fixed hour, as at our ordinaries in England ; and you have abundance of provision of every kind the country affords. Poultry in every shape, with the standing dish, ham or bacon : but you must be aware, that in a country so extensive as I have already traversed, there must be as much difference in accommodations, as there is between the best inns on the great roads of England, and those in the remote villages. The beds generally cleanly ; but although I have

not suffered the inconveniences so magnified in England from musquitoes, the often-brought charge of being infested with that ugly and sleep-destroying insect the bug, is indeed too true. Also, the many-bedded rooms found in most taverns, as you travel westward, is more than an inconvenience, as often being the sleeping-place of those who fall sick, as of those who are in health; and, in this respect, the Americans are criminal, and instrumental in spreading infection, which might be avoided by a little expense in the division of sleeping-rooms; but there are many happy exceptions; and, as civilization advances, this evil will be cured.

As to the general character of the Americans, it is sober, industrious, and hospitable; although drunkenness, idleness, and gambling, are vices in existence, they are kept in the back ground, and are by no means so conspicuous as amongst what are called the lower class in England.

It is remarkable, that in the houses of the wealthy, as well as in store or shop-keepers back-rooms, it is the common practice to ask you to take a glass of water, cool fresh water, as a refreshment; at which offer no one is offended; and when wine or liquors are on the

salver, water is often preferred ; but our countrymen would think it a sad insult to be invited to so simple a refreshment.

I have, my dear sir, met with no instances of a rude ruffian-like character, that will apply to Americans generally ; and, I believe, much less than I should have met with in England, had I travelled her roads and rivers to the extent I have done in this country.

The American notion of liberty and equality is highly gratifying to me. The master or employer is kept within the bounds of reason and decency towards his labourer. No curses or oaths towards their servants, or HELPS as they choose to call themselves ; (for every one who takes money or wages, is, after all, a servant ;) he obeys all reasonable orders for his remuneration ; and when this obedience ceases, the contract of service is at an end. I have often been surprised at the highmindedness of American labourers, who are offended at the name of *servant* (*c*).

With respect to this place, I have, in former letters, stated it to be a phenomenon in the history of the world ; twenty five years since it was trodden only by the foot of the savage ; now it contains about three thousand inhabitants. A college, at which are already one

hundred and forty students (*d*) ; its professors, chosen purely for their talents, without any requirement of unanimity of religious opinions, as in the colleges with you : professors so chosen, not being confined to any particular sect, are likely to fill their stations with ability ; and, as far as I am capable of judging, are eminently calculated for their respective situations to which they are chosen. This institution promises to be in the moral world, what the sun is in the natural world, and is calculated to illuminate, civilize, and bless mankind.

To the inhabitants of Lexington, wherever I may reside in future, I shall ever feel grateful : their hospitality, their kindness to me, as a stranger, and their sympathy in the hour of affliction, are never to be effaced from my memory.

Their politeness and liberality are perhaps, unequalled. Balls, at which the fair sex are never allowed to share any expence,—an Athenæum and a considerable museum, the benefits of which the stranger is invited to partake *gratis*,—may be mentioned as not being very customary in England. Tea-parties are a continual festival from the time you enter to the time of your departure, which however, are too much like our routs in England ; and in time, I should fear would, as they have in England, be-

come a substitute for hospitality. I have known collected at these parties from one to two hundred persons. Thus, my dear Sir, you see, instead of being in continual broils, and exposed to the affronts and insults of rude Americans, I have received nothing but civility and hospitality. It will hardly be credited when I assure you I have not yet met with a single annoyance in the whole of my journey from New York to Pittsburgh by land; nor from thence down the Ohio to Louisville,—a distance of six hundred miles by water, and five hundred miles by land: thus you see, my dear friend, I am in no danger at present, of being disgusted by American rudeness, irreligion, or fanaticism.

To your last question,—How can you reside in a state where personal slavery is in existence? I, with regret, reply, this is the spot which clouds the American sun of liberty; and I confess I know not which are most excited in me, the risible or the sorrowful feelings, when I hear a *Kentuckyan* boasting, in lofty terms, of the liberty of his country, when that country is divided into two classes, and two classes only—the master and the slave! The term of *master* implies the willing servitude of *free men*; the term *slave*, includes in it the admis-

sion of tyrants or tyranny ; and a Kentuckyan has no more right to talk of freedom than the *legitimates*, whose determined purpose it is to blot liberty and happiness from the face of the earth. The one talks of liberty and social order, and it appears that by it is meant the increasing trappings of monarchy ; the other does the same of liberty, and the rights of men.

The legitimates, who have high notions of regal authority, attempting to subjugate the minds of men, is perfectly consistent with their notions of power, their education and habits ; but to hear the republicans of slave states point to the *Declaration of Rights*, who inform the coming traveller that they are now blazoned forth on satin and velvet ;—an American republican pointing to the *Rights of Men* with his left hand, while his right is obliged to hold the whip, and with watchful eye to subjugate the minds and bodies of a large share of the population of his state :—this, indeed is worthy the taunts and derision of kings. It is this that keeps the wealth of Europe from pouring its treasures into the fertile region of Kentucky, and the industry of thousands from approaching the state (*e*). It would be painful to relate all the horrors I have beheld in slavery under

its mildest form. Whites full of whiskey, flogging their slaves for drinking even a single glass! Women, heavy with young, smarting under the angry blow, or the lash, and with babes at the breast, which one of our writers calls "*Nature's passport* through the world," lacking food in the midst of abundance, and cloathing insufficient to satisfy the demands even of common decency. Avarice, which our Poet *Young* calls "Earth's greatest blunder—Hell's loudest laugh;"—avarice, which seems to be the source of all this mischief, now comes to the relief of the ragged lingering wretch. If they are miserable, they must not die, for a mother and infant are worth from six hundred to a thousand dollars: but in a slave state, avarice has preserved life, clothed the wretched, and fed the hungry; it has fattened and made fine, the slave that he or she may fetch at the hammer, one or two hundred dollars more. "Lord, what is man!" Was it for this that your heroes fought, bled, and died? Was it for this, that the brave and virtuous Washington, to whom so many memorials in the way of oration and praise are delivered on each succeeding anniversary of his birth, spent his long and glorious course? Oh! youth of Kentucky, when you speak of his

fame with the enthusiasm of a republican, speak of his humanity, read his will ; see his ardent desire to let the captive go free : imitate his virtues, and fall not into the errors of tyrants, who suppose military glory to be the glory of a christian.

It is worthy of enquiry, whether it is likely that Americans will escape the judgments with which God has afflicted other nations, while their land is infected with personal slavery, and whether the liberties of America are not endangered by the increase of its black population. Perhaps some ambitious military chief may take the work from the hands of republicans, and “proclaim liberty to the captives,” and make them the instruments of political slavery : let it be the work of crowned despots to subjugate the minds and bodies of men, but let not republicans assist in such a work.

Whenever you take Freedom’s sacred name into your lips—whenever you unfurl the standard of partial liberty—you stand self-condemned. Despots keep men’s minds in ignorance, that the voice of slavery and abject dependance may not be heard even in its defence. Do ye not the same : both your efforts will be in vain ; the minds of men are in progressive march, and your united efforts will not stop their destination.

"No, bless'd with freedom, unconfin'd,
"Dungeons can ne'er contain the soul;
"No one can chain th' immortal mind,
"No one but Him who spans the pole."

I remain, yours sincerely,

R. F.

LETTER II.

Illinois, near Albion, Aug. 16.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

AFTER many interruptions I removed from Lexington to this place, at which we arrived on the 2nd of July, spending in our way a week at *Harmony*, that wonder of the west (*f*).

You have heard this settlement mentioned, and it is worth visiting to see, and observe the effect of united industry, regulated by sound wisdom and discretion: here perfect equality prevails, and there are no servants; but plenty of persons who serve. Every man has his station appointed him according to his ability, and every one has his wants supplied according to his wishes. He applies to the mill for his supply of flour; to the apothecary for medi-

cine; to the store for cloaths, and so on for every thing necessary for human subsistence. They do not forbid marriage, as some have represented; but it is one of their tenets that the incumbrance created by families is an hindrance to the spirituality of christians, and it is this opinion which discourages marriage amongst them. They have also an aversion to bear arms; this would not allow them to remain in Germany, and they emigrated to live in the manner they have adopted, and have certainly the outside appearance of contentment and happiness.

After travelling through the woods of Indiana, the hills divide to the right and left, and a fine valley opens to your view in which the town stands. The hills assume a conical form, and are embellished with fine cultivated vineyards; and the valleys stand thick with corn. Every log house is surrounded by a well cultivated garden, abundantly supplied with vegetables, and ornamented with flowers. It was the beginning of wheat harvest when I arrived, and the entire company of reapers retired from the fields in a body, preceded by a band of music: their dress is like the Norman peasants, and as all are of the same form and colour, may properly be designated their

costume. The men marched first, the women next, and the rear rank composed of young women, with each a neat ornament of striped cedar wood on their head, formed one of the prettiest processions I ever witnessed. The sound of French horns awakened them in the morning to their daily labour, which is moderate, and performed with cheerfulness; the return of evening appears to bring with it no fatigue or symptoms of weariness.

Besides the gardens of individuals, there is a public garden of five acres, the outside square planted with fruit trees and vegetables, the inside with herbs medicinal and botanical. In the centre is a rotunda of the rustic kind, standing in the midst of a labyrinth, which exhibits more taste than I supposed to be found amongst the Harmonites. It is from this hive of industry that Albion and its vicinity have drawn their supplies, and its contiguity to such neighbours has been of great advantage.

Having given you this account, I arrive at the point at which, my dear friend, I know you feel most interest, and proceed to give you an account of the state in which I found my friends, and the English settlement in general. I have great satisfaction in being able to inform you that almost every individual I

knew in England, was much improved in appearance, all enjoying excellent health. The same blessing is also our lot, and if I can form a proper estimate from six weeks residence, I must pronounce this to be as healthy a situation as any America affords, and much preferable, in this respect, to the eastern states. What travellers have recorded, that the thermometer does not rise so high as in the east, is true, and we are never many hours without a fine breeze. The nights are cool, the thermometer dropping 10 degrees, and you can obtain refreshing sleep. In the eastern states the thermometer being at 98 in the day, remained at 96 at night, a suffocating heat. The average of our days are from 80 to 86, but we have had a day or two at 90, which produces a thunder gust and a cooler atmosphere.

Now, my dear sir, as to the questions which agitate the minds of thousands in your country. The advantages of emigration to America, and the comparative advantages of eastern and western climates. I am, most decidedly, for settling in the west, on account of the prairies, and the facility with which they are cultivated.

The cultivation of new land, incumbered with heavy timber, presents a formidable fea-

ture ; labour incessant and unremitting, before a small tract of land can be tolerably cleared : but here I can enter either as a farmer or a grazier immediately ; fine wide spreading fields of grass, inviting the flocks and herds to come and partake of the bounty with which they are loaded. In answer to the enquiry as to the proper mode of farming, I sit, and from the place I am now writing, see a beautiful herd of cattle of nearly two hundred in number. I have one hundred tons of fine hay collected for spring provision. Every head of cattle, the expence of herdsman deducted, on a moderate calculation, promises a fair profit of at least five dollars per head ; and yet Mr. Cobbett, in his weekly letters, very *modestly* asserts, "There is no farming for profit in the west !"—I state these facts for the information of those who may wish to join us, and in direct contradiction to the ill-founded assertions of this writer on the subject.

It is also stated by Mr. Cobbett, that "the obstruction by bush and briar are such as to prevent early or easy cultivation."—In contradiction to this assertion, I affirm, that I can put the plough into thousands of acres where there is no such obstruction. One

gentleman in our settlement has grown eighty acres of fine corn, although he only arrived last year ; this alone is a sufficient contradiction to all Mr. C. has said on this subject. There is also a sufficiency of corn and grain grown this first harvest to supply the wants of the settlement : next year there will be a surplus for brewing and distilling.

If a person enters heavy timbered land, it is by great exertion he clears ten acres the first year ; but he has only here to enclose and take his choice of farming and grazing, or enclose enough for corn and pasture, his cattle feeding on the unoccupied range of grass which the neighbouring cultivator cannot stock himself, and which is much improved by the feeding of cattle.

Now, my dear Sir, as to the persons who come here or to any other part of America, I would have them consider for what purpose and intent they emigrate. It is certain as regards farming, that there are only two ways in which it can be performed : the one, labouring by his own hands ; the other, by his capital, stocking his farm, and hiring his labourers. It is thoughtlessness and folly to tell any person, if he bring with him one hundred pounds, he can place himself in comfort ; but, it is certain, that a

hundred pounds here will go as far as five hundred pounds in England ; and that the person who has that sum in possession, is certainly five times better off than in that country. The person who has this sum may enter his quarter section of land, build his cabin, enclose his garden, keep his cows and pigs ; but then he must be a man of that description who has been in the habit of milking his cows and tending his pigs : all such persons will find vast advantage in emigrating to this place. Every farmer in England (of which there are thousands) who holds the plough, or his sons for him, will find an easy life, and the abundant supply of every good thing. As to the reward of his industry, every farmer who can stock a farm in England, may here become the proprietor of his own soil with that capital which affords him only a tenant's station, a precarious subsistence in his own country ; an inducement, I should think, sufficient to make thousands follow our steps, and taste the blessings of independence and the sweets of liberty. Let all who are bending under the weight of taxation, and trembling at the approach of every quarter-day, come here and partake of ease and abundance. If the affluent, also, are tired of the system of the British government,

and feel the effect it has upon their fluctuating property, here they will find the wide domain, the natural park, whose hills and boundaries are beautifully capped with woods, inviting them to build their dwellings and sit down in ease and content. These parks are already stocked with deer, all which they may purchase, where previous entry has not taken place, at the land office price, two dollars per acre. These prairies appear as if that eminent improver of parks and grounds—*Repton*, had been consulted in laying them out to their taste.

It has been reported that we can get no servants : this is true in a degree, because the price of service is such, as soon to elevate the servant to a state of independance : but I have found no want of persons to work for hire, even in domestic stations ; those that are most wanted are farming labourers ; good ploughmen are in request, and can obtain twelve dollars per month and their board. Female servants from eight to ten dollars, according to their respective merits ; these are in great request ; and what perhaps is to them still more pleasing, their industry is the certain road to marriage. Our young females are almost all engaged in this way, and we certainly lose good servants,

but have the pleasure of seeing them well settled.

Now, my dear Sir, as to the state of the settlement and the progress it has already made.

On a tract of land from the little Wabash to the Bonpar on the Great Wabash, about seventeen miles in width, and four to six from north to south, there were but a few hunters' cabins, a year and a half since, and now there are about sixty English families, containing nearly four hundred souls ; and one hundred and fifty American, containing about seven hundred souls, who like the English for their neighbours, and many of whom are good neighbours to us. We have nothing here like loneliness. In our circle of English acquaintance, as well as in that of American settlers, we find companions who are often found interesting and intelligent. In good deed and in truth, here is, to the industrious, a source of wealth more certain and productive than the mines of Golconda and Peru. Industry of every kind has its ample reward : but for the idle, the drunkard, and the vicious, there is no chance ; spirits are cheap, and a short existence is their certain portion. All persons feeling anxieties that attend agricultural pursuits may be re-

leased from those anxieties by emigrating to the Illinois.

Your newspapers, the Farmer's Journal in particular, relate the particulars of the distress of the farmers, and the ruin in which many of them are involved. It is in vain that you petition for relief. By your own account your ruin is inevitable, and your destruction sure. Escape then to a land where the efforts of your industry will be rewarded, and the produce of your labour will be your own. You will escape, not only from the tax-gather and tithe-collector, but from the expence attending the frightful system of pauperism, which is constantly making demands, not only on your pecuniary resources, but calling you to the most painful personal exertions.

In the extensive region from New York to this place, I have had but one application for relief, and that was from an Englishman. In this country peace and plenty reign.

I have mentioned a scarcity of servants : this arises much from emigrants bringing out with them a better sort, or confidential servants : the only sort wanting are females who can work in the kitchen, milk the cow and attend to the dairy. All above this class can earn too high wages by their needle. A good semp-

stress, earning a dollar per day, will soon quit servitude, and put on the airs of American independance, with an addition of some little insolence ; but a cure is not unfrequently wrought, and that by various easy methods.

A gentleman hired a female servant of this sort, who would insist, as a condition, on sitting down at the dinner table, with the family ; her christian name was *Biddy* ; the condition was consented to, and a project for cure at the same time engaged in :—A party was invited to dinner, and Biddy took her place at the table, being above waiting, or being in any degree more than a HELP. When anything was wanting, a gentleman arose from table and offered it to Miss Biddy. Miss Biddy was asked to drink a glass of wine, first by one gentleman and then by another. Miss Biddy was desired not to trouble herself about any thing, and was ceremoniously treated, till she felt the awkwardness of her situation, and said, the next day to her mistress,—“ Madam, I had rather give up dining at your table,”—which she did, continuing in their service for some time. I have had to do with people of the same cast, though not quite so foolish as Miss Biddy :—I have hired persons to certain employments, and they have been discontented

and spoiled by their notions of equality: "Very good," said I; we, then, are equal; I like the idea much; it pleases me greatly; you, of course, mean to take no money of me for what you please to do for me; and, if that is the case, I shall be as perfectly satisfied with your notion of things, as you appear to be; but, if you take my money, you must perform the service I have pointed out to you."— This perfect notion of equality does not suit, although it is too reasonable to be much objected to.

It is generally supposed, that this high notion is of republican origin; but it is the contrary, and originates in the insolence of those who keep and domineer over slaves. Anything that a black is made to perform, is pronounced unfit for whites; and, although many who have held slaves as their property, are far inferior in understanding to the slaves they hold, and are sometimes reduced to poverty, they deem it degrading to perform any work that a slave can perform; and those persons who, like myself, are far from thinking all men equal in character, are little disposed to engage with such persons in any service. With our superiority in our consistent love of freedom, and our having escaped from political

slavery, we shall never fail to oppose the extension, and even the continuance of personal slavery.

The arguments for a state of slavery, urged by Americans, are just such as might be urged by Algerines for taking the ships of America, and making slaves of her seamen. Both consist in the right of force, and not of reason or justice; and when a person hears members of congress pleading the cause of slavery,—personal slavery,—with the pretence *they are my property*, one cannot help blushing for human nature. Those who appear to love freedom, both personal and political, making use of such a pretence, forces the tear of sorrow from the eye of humanity. One human being the property of another. No! the whole race of mankind is the sole property of their great universal parent; and he who enslaves another, whether his skin be black, white, or intermediate, insults the right of his God, and blasphemes the name of his Creator.

I rejoice, my dear friend, in the choice the English have made of a free state; and am certain we shall be able to cultivate from the services of free men, cheaper than those who cultivate them by slaves.

But to return to our settlement and its in-

fant capital *Albion*. Log houses, those cabins unpleasant to the cleanly habits of Englishmen, the receptacles of the insect tribe, are no longer erected. I have had the pleasure of laying the first brick foundation in Albion ; it is for an inn where travellers I hope may find rest without disturbance from insects. We have also nearly completed our market house which is sixty feet by thirty. A place of worship is began. Religion, I mean the outward form, has not been unattended to : a selection from the Church of England service, and a sermon has been read on the sabbath to a few persons assembled in a log room : our psalmody is excellent, having some good musicians, and singers amongst us. The Americans here think all who take money for preaching, *hireling* ministers, and several well-intentioned farmers preach to small assemblies in the neighbourhood. The worship of God, and the keeping his commands is the thing which I believe all will agree in, as being the end to be produced by public worship. As we have not, and I trust never shall have, that grand corruption of christianity, an establishment formed and supported by statesmen and politicians, I hope christianity in its original purity, will for ever flourish in the Illinois. We intend also our place of worship for a li-

brary, and to open it on a sunday afternoon ; a day when all persons have leisure to read, and are clean in their dress and persons. The strict sabbatarians will doubt the propriety of this proceeding ; but any thing which will have a tendency to promote moral and intellectual improvement, and keep men from the vices of idleness and drinking, is justified by him who put the question,—“ Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath ? ”

But to return from spiritual to temporal things. I spoke of our market house being finished. The price of provisions in this place is as follows.

A fine turkey, a quarter of a dollar.—Fowls, twelve cents each.—Beef four to five cents per pound.—Mutton none yet at market.—Eggs twelve and a half cents per dozen.—Cheese thirty cents per pound.—Butter scarce, owing to the heat of the climate, sixteen cents per pound.—Bacon at this time fifteen cents per pound, half the price in winter.—Flour nine dollars per barrel.—Deer, a fine fat buck from one dollar to one dollar and a half including skin.—Melons, such as cannot be procured in England, twelve and a half cents each in great abundance.—Honey of the finest flavour, one dollar per gallon.—Whiskey one dollar per gallon

retail.—Fine Hyson tea two dollars per pound. Moist sugar thirty one cents.—Coffee sixty-two cents per pound : wholesale from New Orleans much cheaper. Fine fish three cents per pound.

We leave it to the public to judge of our danger of starving, as some writers have hinted.

Here then you have the situation of our rising settlement ; progressing with rapidity in the eye of Americans, though to Englishmen, setting and watching for fresh intelligence, but slowly.

You ask me, dear Sir, whether there is any sale for books here? We have no bookseller yet, and the writings of your favourite authors, in defence of civil and religious liberty, would not sell here : the love of civil and religious liberty is unbounded in every Illinois heart ; there are none to dispute the truth of the principles of complete and perfect freedom ; and when controversy ceases, controversial writings must of course lose their interest.

I would not for the world invite persons, no! not a single individual, if I did not think that his happiness would be encreased : it may be said that I am an interested person, and so are those who take such pains to prevent persons from coming westward. Emigra-

tion from the eastern states, has already reduced the price of lands there.

When I passed New York, I heard a popular writer (*g*) say, "I'll be d——d if I don't write down Birkbeck and the settlement:" those who are familiar with this writer's usual phraseology in conversation, cannot, I think, be in any great danger of mistake as to the person alluded to: how far he has succeeded, the public will be a proper judge when they carefully peruse the facts I have stated, and compare the evidence they receive from time to time through the various channels from the Illinois. We have here plenty of scribes, and the truth—the whole truth will appear before both an American and British public.

I remain,

Your sincere friend,

RICHARD FLOWER.

THE END.



C. TEULON, Printer, 67, Whitechapel.

NOTES TO "LETTERS FROM LEXINGTON AND THE ILLINOIS."

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- (a) page 1, "Lexington." From this, the chief settlement in the State of Kentucky, Mr. Flower wrote this letter while awaiting the construction of the Flower house at Albion. (See the Introduction.)
- (b) page 8, "A judgment day." The Church was disestablished in America at the time of the American Revolution. Upon its foundation was erected the Protestant Episcopal Church.
- (c) page 10, "Name of servant." This sensitiveness was due to the levelling influence of a new country and a democratic government. It continues to the present time.
- (d) page 11, "Hundred and forty students." This was Transylvania University, the first institution of higher education west of the Allegheny Mountains. It was founded about 1780, and later was merged into the present University of Kentucky.
- (e) page 13, "Approaching the State." In 1820 Kentucky contained 126,732 slaves. Of the twenty-five States in the Union only nine were free from slavery. The anti-slavery feeling was strong in Kentucky at this time. Among those who had migrated to the North of the Ohio River and freed their slaves was Edward Coles, first governor of the Illinois Territory. He first suggested Illinois to Birkbeck as a place of colonization. In 1818 an effort was made to introduce slavery into Illinois. Coles and Birkbeck were actively engaged in defeating the attempt.



(f) page 16, "Wonder of the West." George Rapp brought to Pennsylvania in 1803 a colony of religious followers called "Economites." Removing later to Southern Indiana, he founded the religious celibate community of Economy on the Wabash River, some thirty miles above its junction with the Ohio River. In 1824 they sold their property to Robert Owen, the philanthropist of New Lanark, Scotland, and returned to Pennsylvania.

(g) page 32, "A popular writer." William Cobbett.

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LETTERS
FROM
THE ILLINOIS,
1820, 1821.

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE ENGLISH SETTLEMENT
AT ALBION AND ITS VICINITY, AND A REFUTATION OF
VARIOUS MISREPRESENTATIONS, THOSE MORE PARTICULARLY OF MR. COBBETT.

By RICHARD FLOWER.

WITH A LETTER FROM M. BIRKBECK ; AND A PREFACE
AND NOTES BY BENJAMIN FLOWER.

*Thou shalt bless the LORD thy GOD for the GOOD LAND which he hath
given thee :—beware that thou forget not the LORD thy GOD.*

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

DIVINE COMMANDS.

London :

PRINTED FOR JAMES RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY

By C. Teulon, 67, Whitechapel.

1822.

[*Price Two Shillings and Sixpence.*]

PUBLISHED BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

Price One Shilling.

LETTERS from LEXINGTON and the ILLINOIS, 1819;
containing a Brief Account of the English Settlement in
the latter territory, and a Refutation of the misrepresen-
tations of Mr. Cobbett.

PREFACE.



Two of the following letters have before appeared in a respectable periodical publication, in which the editor has impartially inserted the communications of writers of different opinions, on the subject of emigrations ;* but as they may be said to be a continuation of former letters, and connected with those now for the first time published, I have thought proper to insert them.

Readers who are desirous of forming just opinions on this subject, are requested to bear in remembrance the precise stations described in the following pages. However unworthy or base may have been the motives of certain writers, who have grossly calumniated the English Settlement, there are others,

* Monthly Repository, Aug. and October, 1820.

to whom it would be uncandid to impute such motives, but who are chargeable with misrepresentation, which appears to have arisen from their not having considered that the spots they are describing are not those described by others; and that, of course, it is not fair to charge others with statements they have never made.

I have publications before me in which Mr. Birkbeck and my brother (*a*) are charged with unfairness in their statements, because they do not apply to the situations the writers had chosen, one or which was fifty, and the other four hundred miles from the English Settlement. There are at the Illinois as in almost all other countries, situations pleasant and unpleasant, healthy and unhealthy, and that emigrant does not act a very wise part, who fixes on a station unless he had carefully examined it himself, or at least had the recommendation of some intelligent friend who would scorn to mislead him.

Emigration to America, after all that has

been written on the subject, and the various advantages it certainly presents to different classes of society, is an affair of such importance, that those who propose it should seriously reflect on the turn of their own mind, their disposition, habits, circumstances, &c. Some who have emigrated to America find themselves as unhappy there as they were in their own country. Those who are averse to labour, fond of luxuries, and whose minds are rivetted to the artificial distinctions of society in Europe, have found to their cost, that America is not the country for them; and unless they can learn wisdom, and form resolution sufficient to alter some of their habits, and if not to despise, to regard with indifference most of those distinctions, they can never be reconciled to Republican manners and institutions. Respecting a few persons of this description at the Illinois, one of the principal settlers exclaimed: —“What are such people come here for?”

For the Notes to the following letters, with
“all their imperfections on their head,” I am

solely responsible.—I am not without apprehensions that there may be even candid readers, who may think that in my *Reflections on Infidelity, Civil Establishments of Religion, &c.*, I have somewhat wandered out of my way: to such readers I beg leave to offer a word or two by way of apology. True religion, I consider as the most important concern of life; and were I, when reflecting on the state of society which too generally characterizes this globe, even its most civilized parts, and on the various follies and vices which have so sadly deformed mankind—on the adversity of the righteous, and the prosperity of the wicked,—were I not, amidst such reflections, supported by divine consolations, suggested by a firm belief in the *Being* and *Providence* of God, and of the truth of the christian system which assures us that “all things shall be subdued “and reconciled to HIM,” I should indeed be “of all men the most miserable;” and, as I am firmly persuaded that the success of the gospel is not more hindered by open infidelity than by

the corruptions of christianity, I have from the circumstances which are stated in the following letters respecting the state of religion at the Illinois, thought proper to express myself on the subject with my usual freedom. So little has been done towards the restoration of primitive christianity in this country for the two past centuries, although there has been of late, an unusual bustle in the religious world,—so inveterate are the evils resulting from STATECRAFT and PRIESTCRAFT united, that although I believe with a firm and unshaken faith, *that the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ*, I confess my ignorance as to the period, and the means by which those glorious events predicted in the sacred writings will be accomplished. I cannot however but indulge the hope that mankind will, by observation and experience, under the blessing of heaven, grow wiser; and that in the formation of new settlements, many of the evils referred to, may with proper care be avoided. With this hope, I

have endeavoured to give a helping hand, however feeble, to those who have at heart the best interests of their fellow creatures.

For the language I have made use of in exposing bad men, and more particularly a notorious political impostor, who when indulging his deep-rooted prejudices and violent passions, cares not how he throws off the common feelings of humanity, or sets truth and decency, or the principles of honour and honesty at defiance, scarce any apology is necessary. Should any one think my language too strong, I might plead the example of some of the greatest and best men in different ages ; but I shall confine myself to that of the sacred writers. The prophets and apostles, yea, our Saviour himself, when describing the COBBETTS of *their* day, have used much stronger language than I have done ; and if it be a duty at any time to *rebuke sharply*, or as critics inform us the words should be rendered, with *a cutting severity*, or *cutting to the quick*, it is when we have to do with men of such a description.

In conclusion, I ask I hope no great favour in claiming on behalf of Mr. Birkbeck, my brother, and myself, that credit for our statements, until they are refuted by evidence, to which persons who have little character to lose, cannot lay claim; and that we may on the present occasion obtain belief when we have nothing to contradict us but the confident language of a man "known to be wholly "indifferent to truth;" and who has, in the compass of three months only, for his scandalous libels on private characters,—on one of those occasions for having invented the atrocious charge of FORGERY against a former associate—most deservedly smarted in a court of justice. Should I, however unintentionally, have committed any mistake, I shall deem myself bound to acknowledge it.

B. F.

Dalston, Jan. 16th, 1822.

P.S. Mr. Cobbett somewhere remarks—"That he would sooner join the fraternity of *gypsies* in this country than the settlement at the Illinois." This is not so extravagant as some of his assertions, as he has proved himself pretty

well qualified, in one respect at least, for a member of **that** fraternity; namely, by his numerous *gipsy* prophecies.—To select one class only :—How frequently has he in terms the most unqualified and confident, predicted that the Bank of England would *never* return to cash payments; how frequently has he fixed the *period* beyond which it was impossible for bank-notes to preserve their value! Perhaps he had in his eye the accomplishment of his favourite plan,—a general forgery of those notes, as the grand means of bringing about his predictions. Notwithstanding the complete failure of those predictions, (and I could produce numerous instances of similar failure) he, although apparently sadly mortified, goes on with his prophecies, and renews the senseless and injurious advice to the farmers, which he has been giving them for many years past, but which he knows, alas! they cannot follow—to hoard up the gold “because in two years it will buy twice as much land as it will buy now!” It was not many months since he gave them the same advice respecting silver, assuring them “that a bundle of silver would *shortly* prove a mine of wealth.”—*Address to the Farmers, (Register Dec. 15.)* In which publication Mr. C. has, in his language applied to Mr. Webb Hall, so justly drawn his own picture, that I hope the farmers will keep it constantly in view.—“The truth is, Mr. [Cobbett] “is a conceited man with a great deal of loose and indistinct stuff in his head; and, having great powers of front, he puts the stuff forth without hesitation. A modest man may be a weak man and yet not deserve our contempt; but impudence and folly joined claim as much of contempt as man can bestow.”—If the farmers can swallow such “stuff,” they have indeed, what Dr. South

calls an "iron digesting faith," and should the Jesuits visit this, as they are now visiting other countries, they will doubtless consider Mr. Cobbett's boasted "disciples" as well prepared to swallow down the doctrine of *Transubstantiation* !

ERRATA.

Page 24, last line, after the word "to," add as follows :—
 "become man and wife, and their answer of consent. This is registered at the magistrates, and recorded by him at the county court : if"

Page 36 line 20, for "the Illinois," read "of the Illinois."

44 5 from the bottom, for "liberal," read "illiberal."

59 4, for "light," read "life."

60, last line, after the word "circle," add "reject christianity."

74 4 and 5, for "proring" read "procuring."

76 8 from the bottom, for "made," read "may."

LETTERS, &c.

LETTER I.

Albion (b), Illinois, Jan. 18, 1820.

DEAR SIR,

My whole family, I think enjoy, since we have been here, much better health than in England, and we have enjoyed the fine Indian summer, which has lasted full two months, of most charming temperature, the thermometer varying from 70 to 75. We had only two wet days in November, and one sudden change to 35 degrees; the weather in December was equally fine till Christmas-day, when we had frost and snow much as in England, and since that time some very cold days, the thermometer being below freezing, 22 degrees. We have now milder weather, but frost and snow on the ground, and the thermometer again at freezing, but gently thawing.

Our settlement has been remarkably healthy, and everything is going on tolerably well. You

will say *tolerably well* has a suspicious sound ; I will therefore allude to that term in future, and state the inconveniences as well as the pleasures of the autumn. We have experienced considerable inconvenience from drought, and been obliged to draw water by carriage to the town, as the wells did not supply the inhabitants with a sufficiency, and the people, like the Israelites, murmured at us, the town proprietors, as much as ever that stiffnecked people did at Moses. I had no rock to strike, or power to raise water by miracle of any kind, and therefore applied industry and perseverance to make up this deficiency, and offered to supply them with fine spring water at a quarter-dollar per barrel, from a most delightful spring, found on my son George's estate, only eight feet deep, and inexhaustible. I had nearly two miles to draw it, but I lost nothing by my contract, and murmuring was allayed. This want of water would have been a serious objection to our settlement if it had been local, but it has been an unusual drought throughout the whole of the Western country, such as has been rarely experienced, and we have been much better off than the people of Kentucky : it has also awakened our energies, and within half a mile of the town an excellent well has been opened, besides two

others at a mile and a half, so that no lasting want has been known, only a temporary inconvenience suffered.

I am rather particular on this subject, as report had spread that our town had broke up, our people scattered, and disease prevailed for want of water, all which was notoriously false; and through mercy, I think there have been fewer deaths in the number of inhabitants than in any part of England.

Another inconvenience from this drought was, the burning of the prairies much earlier than usual. There is a grandeur in this scene almost indescribable and somewhat alarming. We see whole prairies, containing thousands of acres, like a sea or lake of fire ascending; columns of smoke so affect the air, that it is a complete fog, and painful to the eyes; but after a few days all is over; the sky clear, and the air serene, but our herbage is gone. At this season the cattle go into the barn: we pay a herdsman to look after them, and if the weather is not immoderately wet, they come out as fat as sheep from coleseed, and afford profit to the grazier. Our bullocks, which were bought at sixteen or seventeen dollars last year, are now selling at Albion Market, from twenty-eight to thirty-one dollars each, paying nearly cent per

cent, for nine month's keeping ; thus we are this year principally graziers, having two hundred acres enclosed, and more enclosing. George will have a fine farm opened, an excellent garden and young trees, and vegetables of the most luxuriant growth.

It ought not, however, to be concealed that we are much in want of farming labourers ; we with difficulty get a regular ploughman, and a plough-boy is still a scarcer commodity ; and till we can get our prairies once broken, and go with two horses without a driver, ploughing will be difficult to be performed. Our people put on the independent airs of Americans, without either their natural or noble independence, which disdains any thing like servitude ; but, as if delighting to tease us gave them great pleasure, they quit their work suddenly and without reason ; but we greatly counteract this by keeping them out of employ, and our money in our pockets, and pay the Americans who come out and are always migrating for a job of work, and then return to their farms. We are also, in many instances, destitute of female servants, but then we have plenty of helps, or *charwomen*, who will come and work by the day or half-day, and then return to their families. My wife has managed this business

admirably well: observing their disposition, she hires them by the hour, sees well to them for the time being, and generally gets a usual day's work done in a few hours. This occasional assistance, in addition to the services of Mrs. C. who we brought with us, and a woman servant, makes us comfortably served.

On the return of Christmas day, we invited our party as at Marden, my late residence in Hertfordshire: we assembled thirty-two in number. A more intelligent, sensible collection I never had under my roof in my own country. A plentiful supply of plumb pudding, roast beef and mince pies were at table, and turkeys in plenty, having purchased four for a dollar the preceding week. We found among the party good musicians, good singers; the young people danced nine couple, and the whole party were innocently cheerful and happy during the evening. The company were pleased to say I had transferred Old England and its comforts to the Illinois. Thus, my dear Sir, we are not in want of society; and I would not change my situation for any in America, nor for *disturbed* or *tumultuous* England.

My efforts to assemble the people to public worship have been successful; our place is well attended, from forty to fifty people,

and amongst our congregation we often number a part of Mr. Birkbeck's children and servants. Our singing is excellent; our prayers the reformed Unitarian service. The sermons which have been read are from an author I never met with in England, Mr. Butcher; they are, without exception, the best practical sermons I have ever seen. Our Library-Room is well attended in the afternoon; the people improving in cleanliness and sobriety, recover the use of their intellectual faculties, and interest themselves in moral and christian converse.

When I arrived at Albion, a more disorganized, demoralized state of society never existed: the experiment has been made, the abandonment of Christian institutes and Christian sabbaths, and living without God in the world has been fairly tried. If those theologians in England who despise the Sabbath and laugh at congregational worship, had been sent to the English settlement in the Illinois at the time I arrived, they would, or they ought to have hid their faces for shame. Some of the English played at cricket, the backwoodsmen shot at *marks*, their favourite sport, and the Sunday revels ended in riot, and savage fighting: this was too much even for infidel nerves. All this also took place at Albion; but when a few, a very few,

better men met and read the Scriptures, and offered prayer at a poor contemptible log-house, these revellers were awed into silence, and the Sabbath at Albion became decently quiet. One of its inhabitants, of an infidel cast, said to me, "Sir! this is very extraordinary, that what the law could not effect, so little an assembly meeting for worship should have effected." "Sir," said I, "I am surprised that you do not perceive that you are offering a stronger argument in favour of this Christian institute than any I can present to you. If the reading of the Scriptures in congregation has had such efficacious and such wonderful effects, you ought no longer to reject, or neglect giving your attention to its contents, and its excellent religious institutions."

Thus, my dear Sir, my efforts for the benefit of others have been greatly blessed. I appear at present more satisfied with my lot, because I appear to be more useful than ever; in England all my attempts at usefulness were puny compared to what they are here. Many people here openly express their gratitude to me as the saviour of this place, which, they say must have dispersed if I had not arrived. This is encouraging to a heart wounded with affliction as mine has been, and is urging me

on to plans of usefulness. A place for education (*c*), a Sunday-school, and above all, a Bible-society, if we increase, shall be my aim and endeavour. I have already abundant testimony that God will bless his word, and if the rest of my life should be spent in such useful employment, my death-bed will be more calm than if I had been taken from life before I had arrived at this period of utility. You will, I trust, be able to appreciate the station Providence has placed me in, and feel pleasure at this communication.

My house, which is nearly finished, is a comfortable one, and can boast a roof that neither Hertford nor Marden could. It stands the most drenching rain and drifting snows without letting in any wet. I described it in my former letters; and while I am satisfied with the comfort it affords, the Americans behold it with surprise.

You would have been much amused if you had been with us a few weeks since, when I had a visit from Captain Burke (*d*'), a sensible and intelligent backwoodsman. He paid me a short visit, put off his business that he might fetch his wife, which he did; we thought we saw through the plan; he returned with her the next day, and we felt disposed to gratify their

curiosity. "There wife," said he, "did you ever see such fixings?" He felt the paper, looked in a mirror over our chimney-piece which reflected the cattle grazing in the field before the house, and gazed with amazement. But turning from these sights to the library,— "Now," said he to my wife, "does your old gentleman" (for that is my title here) "read those books?" "Yes," said she, "he has read most of them."—"Why if I was to read half of them, I should drive all the little sense in my head out of it." I replied that we read to increase our sense and our knowledge; but this untutored son of nature could not conceive of this till I took down a volume of Shaw's Zoology. "You, Mr. Burke, are an old hunter, and have met with many snakes in your time. I never saw above one in my life; now if I can tell you about your snakes and deer, and bears and wolves, as much or more than you know, you will see the use of books." I read to him a description of the rattle-snake, and then shewed him the plate, and so on. His attention was arrested, and his thirst for knowledge fast increasing. "I never saw an Indian in my life, and yet," said I, "I can tell you all about them." I read again and shewed him a coloured plate. "There," said he, "wife, is it not

wonderful, that this gentleman, coming so many miles, should know these things from books only? "See ye," said he, pointing to the Indian, "got him to a turn." In short, I never felt more interested for an hour or two, to see how this man's mind thirsted after knowledge; and though he dreaded the appearance of so many books, he seemed, before he left us, as if he could spend his life amongst them.

Our library is now consolidated; and that the kind intentions of yourself and others may not be lost, and that your names may live in our memories and be perpetuated to future generations, I have conveyed all the books presented to us, in trust to the proprietors of the town, for the use of the Albion Library; writing the names of the donors in them; and in my next letter I shall, *pro forma*, be able to convey to you our united thanks for the books presented. Our little library is the admiration of travellers, and Americans say we have accomplished more in one year, than many new settlements have effected in fifty—a well supplied market, a neat place of worship, and a good library.

LETTER II.

Park House (e), Albion, June, 20, 1820.

I have not written many letters to my friends in England, because I was determined not to state any thing on presumption, or of mere opinion, but only matters of fact, which must stand uncontradicted, and bear the test of examination.

I proceed to state to you the circumstances which we are now in; and you will my dear Sir, feel satisfaction at my being able to give you the pleasing account, that, after nearly a twelvemonth's residence, there is no foundation for reasonable complaint. Every workman or artificer has abundance of employment at a price that will procure him a plentiful subsistence; and at this time our little town is amply supplied, with not only the necessities of life, but even its luxuries. I have a comfortable habitation, containing four rooms and a hall on the ground floor, and five chambers above; two wings are added which contain kitchen, china closet, dairy, and an excellent cellar. My farm produces, as it did at Marden, good beef and mutton, with abundance of

poultry, eggs, milk, cream, butter, and cheese. I am quite at home again, and am writing to you surrounded by the same library standing in the same relative situation, in my large easy chair, and enjoying every earthly comfort. I have the happy absence of tax-gatherers, and am never galled with tithes or poor-rate collectors.

Our settlement, thank God, is remarkably healthy, and my family and self have never enjoyed better health than in the situation which some of your reviewers and critics call "the swamps of the Wabash." There is no situation in the habitable globe in which less sickness and fever have taken place in the given period of twelve months, and the evil reports that have been spread about, applied only, in a small degree, to the large party of settlers who, on their arrival, took shelter in the woods, finding none of the conveniences prepared for them which they had reason to expect. All is going on here to the full as well as can be expected or hoped; and if the British settlement does not prosper, it will be the fault of the *settlers* only.

As to religion, the form of it is now regularly attended to by many, and all have the

means of assembling on the Sunday at our small but neat place of worship. We read the *Reformed* or *Unitarian* Liturgy, the *Scriptures*, and *Sermons* from our best English authors. Our place of worship is likewise our library-room. Religion in the outward form is by no means ostentatious, notwithstanding which, we have a large portion of good, sober and industrious people amongst us, who, I trust, by a virtuous example and keeping alive religious feelings, will be ultimately successful in preserving true religion amongst the people of the Illinois.

But to return from spiritual to temporal concerns: I imagine you asking,—Are there then no inconveniences? There are. We have not a sufficiency of female servants, on account of the frequency of marriage, which is constantly depriving us of those we have; and though I have hitherto been well off, yet I am fearful we may be as others are, inconvenienced for want of them. Boys for either plough or house work are scarce, but the entire absence of pauperism more than amply compensates for these privations. How much I regret that more of the overflowing population of England cannot find

their way here, exchanging their poverty for plenty of employment and good fare.

We have East and West India produce in abundance ; silks, crapes, &c., such as you in England only can procure by a breach of the laws. On the first day that I dined at the tavern which I had just finished building in Albion, I drank bottled porter as cheap as in London, and had fine English salt at half the price I paid for it in England. Thus I find I have escaped the ruinous system of taxation which has reduced so many thousands to beggary or the workhouse, and so many of the middling classes to a state of pinching want, whom I have seen shivering through the winter over a few coals called a fire, because their limited means would not afford a cheerful blaze.

A great advantage in settling in the Illinois, rather than many other parts of America, is the state of society amongst us. Most of the persons who emigrate here, are those who have diminished their former fortunes ; persons who have received good education, but are unable to sustain their stations in England. There is no arrogance in saying our circle of society is far superior to that in most of the villages in our native country. Except the parson, the

squire, and the principal farmers, what is the society of many of the English hamlets but rude and uncultivated? Here it is different; for within the circle of a few miles, there is more good company (I mean well-educated persons) than in the same circle in most parts of England.

We frequently find superior education and intelligence among the sons of the plough and the axe, to those in like situations in England. A person lately offered me his services to split boards for me: we agreed for price. I observed a correctness in his pronunciation and manner of speaking, apparently far above his situation. I attended him to the woods; he had with him two younger men than himself. The first singularity that appeared was, after taking off their clothes, (having first ground their axes) a nail or two were driven into a tree, on which were hung handsome *gold* watches. These men were well educated, understood geography, history, European politics, and the interesting events that now so much excite the attention of mankind. I went into my field the other day, and began a conversation with my ploughman: his address and manner of speech, as well as his conver-

sation surprised me. I found he was a colonel of militia, and a member of the legislature; he was indeed a fit companion for men of sense; and where will you find persons of this class in England with equal intelligence?

Of the particular news of this place, there is one piece of intelligence that will surprise you; the author of "Letters from the Illinois," (Mr. Birkbeck) has opened a place of worship at Wanborough; he officiates himself, and reads the *Church of England Service*, so that Wanborough is the seat of *orthodoxy*, and our place stands, as a matter of course, in the ranks of *heresy*? (f).

There is an opinion prevailing amongst many in England, that the marriage ceremony in America is considered lightly of, and but loosely performed; but there never was a greater mistake. A minor cannot marry without the consent of his or her guardian or parent. A license must be applied for at the county court, and a declaration accompanying it from the parent, that it is with *his* consent. This license is taken to a magistrate who performs the ceremony, that is, the legal part of it, at either his own house or that of the parties; which is simply asking if they are willing to



either neglect to make this register, a heavy fine is the punishment of their negligence, and the marriage is considered illegal. This is legal marriage in the Illinois; but both the magistrates inquire of the parties, and the law allows of any addition of a religious kind, that they may choose, and we adopt the vows of the marriage service of the Church of England, which are as solemnly put and answered, as if performed by a person in canonical habits before the altar.

Marriages here take place so frequently, that *we* are certainly in want of female servants; even our Mrs. C., who lived with us upwards of twenty-five years, and is turned of fifty, has not escaped; she is married to a Mr. W., having first refused Monsieur R., an Italian gardener, of very polite manners, and who may be said to have seen a *little* of the world, as he marched from Italy to Moscow with Bonaparte, back to France, and proceeded from thence to this place: he was tall and majestic in person, made very elegant bows to *Madame* C., and spoke English enough to assure her he had the highest esteem for her, and would marry her to-morrow if she would consent; but all in vain, plain *John Bull*



carried the day. We have had ten or twelve marriages within three or four months. This, I think, is settling the Illinois pretty fast, and a good proof that *Cobbett* has not, as he threatened, 'written us down;' nor is there any sign of abandonment, but a good prospect, of increase of population, even if emigration should diminish.

We hear news from England sufficient to appreciate the wretched situation of our native country, and the disturbed state of Europe in general. We see, or think we see most plainly, the phial of God's wrath pouring forth on guilty nations; and England, notwithstanding its pulpit flatterers, in the church and out of the church, is tasting of that wrath. It appears to me that we have great cause for gratitude in escaping divine judgments, and finding an asylum where we may, I hope, rest in peace.

I see, on looking from my window, the golden harvest waving before me; a beautiful field of wheat, the admiration of the country, the first fruits of my son's industry in this kind of grain.

My wife and family enjoy excellent health, and spirits, and had not the Almighty hand

smote me in my tenderest part, by sending his awful messenger to call my dear son William (*g*) away, the days of my emigration would have been the happiest of my life.

R. F.

LETTER III.

March 26, 1821.

As to the settlement in general, I consider it most prosperous, making, comparing it with many new ones, the most rapid strides to comfort and prosperity: our little town, now the capital of the English Settlement has a store which supplies us with luxuries. A market with abundance of meat, poultry, and vegetables, so that persons with very limited incomes might live here in comfort. A person with £100 per annum would be in affluence, which you will say is owing to the cheapness of provisions;* and freedom from tythes, taxes, poor's rates, &c. The labourer or mechanic who is steady, can work himself into plenty.

* Flower's Letters from the Illinois, 1819.

We are relieved entirely from the dreadful state of pauperism witnessed before I left England. My wife, with others of our acquaintance, have not had such good health for twenty years past. Mrs. Flower rides twenty miles a day, on horse back, with ease. I wish you could visit my old servant T. S. on one of the pleasantest situations in the world, with his nice garden, his cows, pigs, and poultry about him ; his wife and children contented and happy. Perhaps were you to come suddenly upon him, eggs and bacon with a hastily got up chicken might be your fare ; but if you gave him a day's notice, you would see a haunch of venison, or a fine cock turkey on the table. How long would Tom have fagged in England, although he had double his wages, before he could have possessed himself of two hundred acres of good land, and been placed in such affluence. Here, indeed, it may be truly said that the hand of the diligent maketh rich. We have here and there an idle person, but Providence has given them an industrious help-mate ; and I know two instances of females earning from six to eight dollars a week by their needles ; enough for for them to keep comfortable tables.

I have felt great satisfaction in never having

invited any one to emigrate, and still greater in finding those who came here out of regard to my opinions, in such situations of ease and comfort, as not only to contribute to their own happiness, but to add greatly to mine. I may say that those who have asked and taken my advice have succeeded to their wishes; and in all cases which have come to my knowledge, where affairs have been conducted with industry and tolerable discretion, they have occasion to be thankful for the change they have made from the old world to the new. Our population increases. We want in particular more tailors and shoemakers: any one understanding the coarse earthen-ware manufactory would meet with great success.—I have just finished a flour mill on an inclined plane, which has given fresh spirit to agriculture. Distilleries are also building. It is a happy circumstance that while industry is attended with certain success, vice, drunkenness, and idleness are no better off than in Europe; the effect of this will be to give the virtuous that natural ascendancy over the vicious which they ought always to have. We read in the newspapers of all the bustle you have had about your queen; (*h*) but if it ends without the people regaining their long lost liberties, between the

collission of the different factions, you will only be worse off; and if the regaining of those liberties will not rouse the people to the same exertions for themselves as they have made for their queen, we must smile at their oppressions and say they deserve them.

LETTER IV.

Park House, Albion, Aug. 20, 1821.

DEAR SIR,

Some of my Letters, written in 1819, appeared through the medium of the press; and some of the English Reviewers, after a candid criticism, observed, that they should be glad to hear from me at some future period. Several other persons also have expressed a strong desire to have an account of our *present* situation and future prospects. In compliance therefore, with their wishes, I most cheerfully resume my pen, with the assurance that what I have written may be relied upon as an impartial and candid statement of facts.

Various are the reports which have been circulated in the private circle, and by means of the press, concerning the state of this settle-

ment; and great has been the anxiety which many friends have expressed on our account. It is my purpose therefore, to examine the principal reports which travellers have given of us.

When any one returns to England, though he may have visited us but a few days, he obtains a credence far above those who have only hear-say reports to communicate; whether his visits were made during the winter, amidst rains or snows, or in the summer, when an unparalleled drought pervaded the whole western country. Is so transitory a view to be considered as a just description of the soil, the climate, the advantages or disadvantages of the British settlement in the Illinois? Surely not. I am informed even of some accounts which have been written from settlements above fifty miles distant from us, where circumstances are so very different, that they bear no resemblance to the situation in which we have located. These statements have been brought forward in opposition to the indisputable facts which have been given by us, and they no more apply to this place, than a description of the lowlands of Essex and Lincolnshire can apply to the high and dry situations of Shooter's-hill or Blackheath. I therefore request the reader's

attention to a few observations on the various reports which travellers have circulated of the *English* settlements at the *Illinois*.

I must first be allowed to remark on the want of competency of some very confident writers to form any judgment of our real situation; they appear to be wholly unacquainted with the history of the new settlements, and from this defect are unfitted to form a right judgement of our comparative and relative advantages. Hence the incongruous and contradictory accounts which have been given of our soil, climate, and agricultural concerns. Of the many who have visited us there are two individuals whose reports I hear gain some credence amongst my countrymen; I shall therefore confine my attention chiefly to the accounts they have given of us, and then examine those reports which have been raised from deep-rooted enmity and determined self-interest. These, with a brief account of our present situation and future prospects shall be the remaining subject of this letter.

One of these travellers visited us when the snows were melting, and the rains descending: he reports us to be dwelling upon the swamps of the Wabash; and our lands to be so wet that they are unfit for either cattle or sheep to

thrive on; and on that account unsuitable for the purposes of an English farmer.

Another passed through our country in an unparalleled drought; and reported us to be in a sad situation for want of water. There was some degree of truth in this, but a very partial degree, owing to his not stating the circumstances of the case. *Our* town is situated very high, and till we had experienced some drought we knew not that we should want to dig deep for water, and of course could not provide for an exigency that was not known to exist. "*Dig deep*" I have said; but one hundred feet is thought, by a western American to be a vast and dangerous enterprise; we have however with us Englishmen who have been far into the bowels of the earth in England, and have no sort of fear of there not being abundance of water in Albion; already have we experienced the benefit of these exertions; but while our dry-weather traveller was reporting our inconveniences, he should have stated it was an unusual season which pervaded the whole of the western country: that Kentucky and Ohio were worse than the Illinois; and that in Indiana, in the best watered districts, springs, rivulets, and wells were exhausted. Such an instance has never before occurred

during the memory of the oldest inhabitants. The same person (who I know would not willingly give a false account) has stated that so short was the water that we were obliged to send our cattle into Indiana.—That our herds were in Indiana is very true, but that they were sent there on account of want of water, is equally untrue. We have in Indiana about twelve miles distant some high ground in the midst of low land, subject to be overflowed; on this low ground grows the most luxuriant cane, springing to an extraordinary height; the tender shoots of which, affording excellent food for cattle, we send them in the winter season, with the exception of milch cows and working oxen, to fatten. Our custom is somewhat similar to that of the farmers of the upland districts in England, who send their stock into the fens of Lincolnshire, to fatten on coleseed and superabundant grass. So we dispose of our herds when the winter draws to a close. To this may be added, that the cane in the low river bottoms, growing naturally is the most luxuriant pasturage for summer feeding: and as we only pay the expense of the herdsman, the food either there or in the cane costing nothing: and the herdsman living there we leave our herds; so it was true that they

were in the cane, but were not sent there on account of the want of water. When this person reported that there was shortness of water amongst us, he should have added, that fine wells were no rarity in the vicinity of Albion; that he drank as fine water from our well as he ever tasted in his life; and that from the grounds of Richard and George Flower, Albion, and even a part of Wanborough were supplied.

It will therefore appear that this person, as well as many others, told the truth, but very partially, and not the whole truth, and on that account are not to be depended on. At the very time he was visiting us a person from Kentucky, assured us that we were better off than they were at Kentucky and Ohio.*

Another person who visited us on purpose to examine and spy out the land of evil report, went back to Baltimore and brought his family, stating in his travels that he had not met with such good water as at this place. This same traveller has reported our soil to be poor, and our inability to raise a sufficient quantity of provisions for ourselves, and that we are still dependant on the Harmonites: in this he only shews his

* See Note A.

want of knowledge of the history of new settlements and their progress. Every person knows that the second year is the most unprofitable : the first year being spent in building and fencing, little produce is raised : but then all settlers of property bring a supply with them to make up for this certain deficiency ; but capital being somewhat exhausted, and an increase of population still continuing, must of necessity keep a new settlement short of self-supplies ; but when to this was added an extraordinary drought, is it a matter of surprise that the crops should in some degree have been scanty ; but at the time I am writing, almost every thing these travellers have said of of the Illinois, is happily reversed : they are the remarks of very superficial observers ; though they may be in some degree true at the moment they were written, they are no fit representations the Illinois ; either as to its soil, climate, or general character ; could I but set these very travellers down here at this moment, how would their astonished senses give contradiction to their own accounts !

We have now what the Americans tell us is a usual specimen of the seasons of the Illinois. Frequent rains, with the heat more moderate than the last year. Agriculture is beaming forth

in its glory. If some of our travellers to whom I have alluded were now here, they would see some of the finest wheat crops their eyes ever beheld: they would witness the most luxuriant crops of natural grasses, now gathering for the supply of winter food; also fine plants of artificial grasses well set in our enclosures; they would acknowledge that the corn crops were as abundant, or more so than any they had before witnessed in the United States; but as they are not here I must inform you that our corn crops upon good tillage have the appearance of from sixty to eighty bushels; and in some instances the Americans, who are the best judges, say one hundred bushels *per* acre (*i*). If this is the usual season of the Illinois, which can scarcely be doubted, as it answers the character given by those longest resident, then is the Illinois one of the finest countries under heaven for human beings to dwell in; one of the most delightful given to man for his residence.

Another traveller has stated that the Illinois is in general low and swampy, but that Mr. Flower's family, with one or two others, had placed their houses upon rising ground. This gentleman must either be naturally or wilfully

blind. He might have found, within a circuit of five miles round Albion, numerous pleasing elevations, also inviting that the beauty which they presented to the admiring eye of the settler, would be the only difficulty in the way of instant decision.

Then comes another objector, armed with an *un answerable* question?—"But what will you do with your produce?" This objection only needs to be examined to be refuted. The answer is, that for the present our home market will take all we raise, and if our population increases in future as it has done during the present year, and the probability is that, it will increase much faster, no foreign market will be wanted for ten or a dozen years to come. Our infant town has taken root, and is growing luxuriantly. It has increased one hundred in the number of inhabitants since last September, and its vicinity has added seventy to their number. Our mill is at work, and can grind the produce now raised; and a distillery and brewery will shortly be at work, so that the surplus of several years will not raise more than a sufficiency for the population. We have also in the settlement some small plantations of tobacco, hemp, and cotton, articles which we

at present import ; it will therefore be a work of some time to raise a sufficiency for our own consumption.

Another article of produce is wool. Since I have been here I have turned my attention to an important object which engaged much of my attention in my native country—the breeding of sheep, and have succeeded to the utmost of my wishes and expectations. My flock consists of about four hundred sheep and lambs ; and although the first winter there were unexpected difficulties to encounter, I can assure my countrymen that it has been more healthy this last year than any I ever had, or ever heard of in England ; but as I intend giving an account of my success in this branch of agriculture in some future letter, it will be sufficient to say, that although I can grow in the Illinois a profitable export, at present its produce is wanted, and all that can be raised for years to come, will be wanted at home. We have therefore not only a market for our extra produce around us, but we have also a foreign market at New Orleans, and through it to the market of the world. If it be said that owing to our situation, we labour under peculiar disadvantages, all is reduced to the price of land carriage, of about nine miles to the Wabash,

at sixteen *cents* per hundred pounds. If therefore it is said that our surplus produce cannot be disposed of, it is not applicable to local circumstances alone; but to all America. Whenever the United States in general can dispose of their produce advantageously, the Illinois can do the same; and we are more contiguous to navigation than the great proportion of the interior of America.

The report which has injured us most is the want of that blessing, without which all that this world can give is but of little avail—*Health*. Reports of sickness which never existed, and of deaths which happily never took place, have been most industriously circulated; the fact is, that there has seldom been a new settlement which has suffered so little loss by death; or which has been so free from sickness. The number of deaths has been in the ratio of four in ninety-five each year, and this is a smaller number than in most places in the habitable globe, where the records of such events have been preserved. Many of its inhabitants, have with myself, enjoyed far better health, than in their native country; so that I may safely conclude, after two years residence, with the information of those who were here a year and a half before me, that

there scarcely existed in the habitable globe, a place where the inhabitants have enjoyed so large a share of this invaluable blessing.

As to our future prospects they are truly flattering, in the probability of increasing population, now the clouds and mists which malignity has spread abroad are disappearing, before the light of truth, as the mists of morning disappear before the light and the heat of the sun : the well-grounded hopes of future harvests, arising from the rich abundance of the present ; the perseverance and industry of a large portion of our settlers ; the excellent materials for building, and the increasing number of fine wells of water, all present a most encouraging and delightful prospect.

Another testimony in favour of our situation is, that some of our countrymen who have settled in other places, have visited us, expressing their surprise and regret that they had been the dupes of false reports, and had stopped short of the Illinois. While others more prudently came down from Cincinnati, and even Baltimore to visit this land of evil report, minutely examined for themselves, returned to bring their families, and are contented with their lot.

Another remark was made by certain writers,

that although we had improved our situation as to animal enjoyments, we had sacrificed intellectual pleasures, because I stated, in one of my letters, that there were no booksellers here, and that the necessary business which could not be avoided in a new settlement, left us but little time for reading. Hasty conclusion! Many of us brought out ample libraries of our own, and we have also a standing library in our little town; which is supplied with newspapers and periodical publications. Those who emigrated to the Illinois were not altogether illiterate; a majority of them were quite of a contrary description; and as to agricultural knowledge, there are very few spots on the face of the earth, where it is so much concentrated, as at the Illinois, having farmers from almost all the different counties in England. There are likewise, several American, Dutch, and French farmers, gardeners, and vine dressers in our neighbourhood.

The reports of the wickedness and irreligion of our settlement, with a view to prevent individuals from joining us, have been industriously spread far and near. That there is a diversity of character in every part of the globe, will not be denied; that this diversity exists here is equally true; and that a portion of its inha-

bitants is of an immoral cast, will be as readily admitted ; that we have not left human nature with its infirmities and propensities behind us is equally a fact ; and even if it should be admitted, that unhappily, a larger portion of the dissipated, the idle, and the dissolute are to be met with in new countries than is usually to be found in old ones, yet we have the same antidote for these mischiefs :—the *light shining in a dark place*. We have public worship and ample supplies of sermons from pious practical preachers, from the Catholic to the Socinian Creed, which are read on the Sabbath. But above all we have the *incorruptible seed of the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever* ; and it is with pleasure I can assure my readers, that there is an increasing congregation, and I trust, increasing religion amongst us. But if it was otherwise, surely this should be rather an argument for persons of religious zeal to join us, who have emigration in view ; *to come over to Macedonia and help us*, rather than shrink from such a task. At least it is not apostolic or evangelic feeling that would draw a different conclusion.

When I was at Philadelphia a lady of the Society of *Friends* addressed me most emphatically on the subject :—“ Wilt thou, friend

Flower, take thy family to that infidel and wicked settlement in the Illinois? Thou appearest to be a christian; how wilt thou answer to thy God for endangering the precious souls of thy dear children?" Madam, answered I, my destiny appears to be in the Illinois settlement; and rather than turn from thence on the account you have mentioned, you have furnished me with a forcible argument to proceed. I trust I am as you have supposed a sincere christian, and as it is my special duty to go where reformation is so necessary, I will endeavour to perform it, and hope for the blessing of the Most High. It is for us to use the means. We know who it is to command success in our present state and future prospects.*

It may be worth while to make a few remarks on the characters, situations, and apparent motives of some of those persons by whom we have been misrepresented and reviled.

The first class that opened their batteries of liberal abuse, were the ministerial and hireling writers in England. The emigration of Englishmen, in the Illinois, it appears did not please the masters whom these writers serve; and this is sufficient to account for *their*

* See Note B.

conduct: as usual, they were not very nice, in the means they made use of. Private characters were assailed indiscriminately, and motives imputed to the emigrants which never entered their minds. The grand reason for emigration was to escape that overwhelming system of taxation which had diminished the property of the emigrants, and threatened if they staid much longer, to swallow up the whole. Their conduct has proved their discernment, and justified their proceedings.

How many of my brother farmers have lost their all! How many have been added to the list of paupers since we left our beloved country, newspapers and private letters, agricultural meetings and parliamentary proceedings and reports, sufficiently declare. Happy had it been for many others, if they had accompanied us: some who have followed us have lamented their indecision, and have felt the fatal consequences of their lingering in their own country. The motives and views of this first class of revilers, is too obvious to need father notice.

Another writer, who is, or rather who was once popular, whom I met at New York, passionately expressed his determination *to write us down*: amongst much false reasoning, which

he made use of for this purpose, it is greatly to be feared he also cared but little for truth ; and I have often wondered what could be his motive ? Whether he had some other settlement at heart ; or whether he wished to keep all emigrants near him to persuade them to enter into his grand plan of inundating England with forged Bank of England notes !!—One thing however is decidedly clear ; that he knew nothing about what he was writing ; and our present success, surrounded by so many comforts, is a sufficient proof he did not do us all the harm he intended. Were he to ride over our fine prairies, viewing our flocks, herds, and corn fields, such ocular demonstration of the falsehood of his statements would be to him a sufficient mortification.*

But there is another class of men of a very different sort ; those who were raising rival settlements, in various parts of America, and who had lands for sale : who longed to stop the cash which seemed to be pouring into the lap of the Illinois. It was natural for them, as human nature is constituted, to attempt to arrest its progress ; they therefore joined the hue and cry against the Illinois, and spread reports

* See Note C.

of sickness, starvation, famishing for thirst, frequent deaths, and the consequent abandonment of our settlement. In this they in some instances succeeded, and as I have before hinted, some have visited us who speak of their having been *entrapped*, and express the deep regret that they did not join us. Facts however soon began to dispel the illusion: one gentleman brought his family to Cincinnati, several families visited Baltimore, who notwithstanding the evil tidings that they had heard ventured, although with fearful apprehensions, to the English settlement: but singular as it may appear to our calumniators, after a most minute investigation into our situation and circumstances, in the autumn of the year they could not find a sick person throughout the settlement: nor was the drought which certainly inconvenienced us, peculiar or local; it raged throughout the western country. They were satisfied, and went to fetch their families, who are now residents amongst us to their entire satisfaction. It is no wonder then, that the falsehoods and calumnies which have been so industriously spread, are at length found to be such; and that the character and motives of the persons who have assailed us are duly appreciated: and, as a consequence of these and

other circumstances, one hundred individuals have joined the town of Albion, and about twenty have settled in its environs since last August.

Notwithstanding all I have stated, I would not have my countrymen consider me as inducing them to emigrate, without serious and due consideration of their own circumstances; but rather consider me as advising them if they do emigrate to America, to come and unite with us in the Illinois; resting assured that what I have stated is truth—*impartial truth.*

It is a trial of no mean sort to quit one's native country, and separate ourselves from those for whom we have the sincerest friendship and regard. The privations however of a first settlement are at an end: we may now indeed say "the way is smoothed for them;" and it rests with us who are now settled to be prosperous, contented, and happy. It is equally our duty and our interest, to consider well the blessings we enjoy at this place of abounding plenty. Many of you my countrymen, can look back on the frightful abyss of pauperism and starvation which you have escaped, and should lift up your hearts in gratitude to God for his mercies vouchsafed to you. Forget not who it is that has preserved your lives and prolonged

your days ; blessed you with so much health ; preserved you *from the arrow that flieth at noon day ; and the pestilence that walketh in darkness.* Remember that it depends upon your virtuous endeavours, how great, how good, and how happy the settlement in the Illinois shall be. Eradicate the stain which report has cast on your moral and religious characters ; and may your example be such as to influence the formation of character of this place : that your *ways may be ways of pleasantness, and all your paths be peace.* Remember that without virtue happiness cannot exist. Let future generations rise up and call you blessed ; so that you may, on your departure from this life, rest satisfied that your emigration to the Illinois proved the means of your increasing welfare and happiness in time and eternity.

R. F.



EXTRACT OF A LETTER,

FROM MR. BIRKBECK.

Wanborough, May 7, 1821

SIR,

Regarding the abuse which people have indulged in about my undertakings, and my accounts of them, I find little difficulty in taking it quietly. I have spent four years in this country, and now every day furnishes fresh proofs of the correctness of my early impressions, so complete as to excite a degree of astonishment at my good fortune *in conjecturing rightly*, and occasionally something of self-congratulation, under the hope that partial friends may give me a little credit for sagacity.

A statistical account of this country, by the time I had finished it, and long before it could reach you, would need correction. Satisfied as I am, to a degree of occasional exultation, with the condition of my own farm, and my prospects as an American cultivator, so rapid and certain is the progress of improvement, that I should not be flattered by your reading, six months hence, an account of its present state. Besides, enough has been already written to shew the *candid* public that all our

reasonable expectations are satisfied: for the rest, who *enjoy* our imaginary reverses, and rely more on the superficial accounts of such people as C. F. &c. (*k*), who have never seen the country, or if they have seen it, are incapable of judging, it really is a waste of labour to write for *them*. Those wretched people who indulge their malevolence in personal abuse are unworthy of my notice. It would indeed be to our advantage, and is the only harm I wish them, that their ignorance and their prejudices should continue, lest they should follow us.

We are on the eastern limits of a country differing essentially from all that has hitherto been cultivated in the United States. The people to the east of us are incapable of imagining a dry and rich wholesome country, where they may enter at once on fine lands prepared for cultivation, without the enormous expense of time and labour in *clearing*, which has been bestowed on every acre between this and the Atlantic. The inhabitants of the old States are profoundly and *resolutely* ignorant of the advantages of our prairie country. Books are written in the east to prove the wretchedness of the prairies, by persons who have never approached them within five hundred miles; and English writers of the same

description, some with names and some without, can obtain more credence than is granted to me, from that description of readers. On the whole, I do not think it worth while to undertake the conviction of these people. The settlers here *who prosper*, that is to say, those who possess good morals and common discretion, will, in course, tell their experience to their friends and connections in England, and invite them to follow their example; these again will invite others. This is now going on in all directions. Some *write* for their former neighbours or the residue of their families, others push back to the old country, to conduct them out. Numbers who come to try their hands at a *new* settlement are wholly unfit for *any* place in this world, *new* or *old*, unless it be to supply the requisite quota of evil, which in this imperfect state, adheres to all places. These are the people sometimes most likely to be heard, whilst those who go on well and wisely are little noticed. Their *adventures* are at an end: they "keep a pig" and live happily. A volcano is a fine subject when in action, but the interest ceases with the eruption. At some future day,—some "still time, when there is no room for chiding," should my life be spared, I may lay before my countrymen a statement

of our condition : but the suitable time, I think, is not yet. It is, however, a pleasing office to transmit to an intelligent friend an occasional sketch of the settlement ; and to receive, as I have from you, and I hope you will repeat the obligation, a return of liberal communication.

The various attacks upon my reputation will be repelled, *surely*, though perhaps *slowly*, by time. Among my neighbours, who are now numerous, their effect has ceased already. The accuracy of my statements become daily more evident, and my errors are found to be on the opposite side to *exaggeration* ; a style which I dislike : it is offensive to my taste, as well as my moral feelings : is not a written lie to the full as abominable as one that is spoken ?

The telescope which you have had the goodness to procure for me is an object of pleasant anticipation. This climate is favourable for astronomical observations, and it will add to our rational amusements. I shall therefore be obliged by your forwarding it as before directed, as soon as convenient.

M. B.

NOTES.

[*Note A, page 35.*]

The following Remarks respecting the want of water, and the account of the English settlement at the Illinois, are taken from a most entertaining, interesting, and elegant work, lately published, and of which a *second* edition is in the press. I here insert them, as they tend to confirm the correctness of the accounts published by Mr. Birkbeck and my brother, and contain some excellent advice to emigrants.

“You have expressed in your late letters, some curiosity regarding the condition of the English settlement, in the Illinois, adding, that the report has prevailed that those spirited emigrants had been at first too sanguine, and had too little foreseen the difficulties which the most fortunate settler must encounter. This report, I believe, to have originated with Mr. Cobbett, who thought proper to pronounce upon the condition of the farmer in the Illinois, in his own dwelling upon Long Island. Feeling an interest in the success of our countrymen in the West, I have been at some pains to inform myself as to their actual condition. The following statement is chiefly taken from the letters of two American gentlemen, of our acquaintance who have just visited the settlement; they inform me that its situation possesses all those positive advantages stated by Mr. Birkbeck; that the worst difficulties have been surmounted; and that these have

always been fewer than what are frequently encountered in a new country.

“The village of Albion, the centre of the settlement, contains at present thirty habitations, in which are found a bricklayer, a carpenter, a wheelwright, a cooper, and a blacksmith; a well supplied shop, a little library, an inn, a chapel, and a post office, where the mail regularly arrives twice a week. Being situated on a ridge, between the greater and little Wabash, it is from its elevated position, and from its being some miles removed from the rivers, peculiarly dry and healthy. The prairie on which it stands, is as exquisitely beautiful; lawns of unchanging verdure, spreading over hills and dales, scattered with islands of luxuriant trees, dropped by the hand of nature, with a taste that art could not rival — all this spread beneath a sky of glowing and unspotted sapphires. The most beautiful parks of England, would afford a most imperfect comparison. The soil is abundantly fruitful, and of course has an advantage over the heavy timbered lands, which can scarcely be cleared for less than from twelve to fifteen dollars per acre, while the Illinois farmer, may in general clear his for less than five, and then enter upon a more convenient mode of tillage. The objection that is too frequently found to the beautiful prairies of the Illinois, is the deficiency of springs and streams for mill seats. This is attended with inconvenience to the settler, though his health will find in it advantage. The nearest navigable river to Albion is the Wabash, eight miles distant: the nearest running stream, that is not liable to fail at Midsummer, the Bonpaw, four miles distant. The stock water in ponds for cattle, was liable to run dry in a few weeks, and the settlement apprehended some temporary inconvenience from

the circumstance. The finest water is every where to be raised from twenty to twenty-five, or thirty feet from the surface, these wells never fail, but are of course troublesome to work in a new settlement.

“The settlement of Albion, must undoubtedly possess some peculiar attractions for an English emigrant, promising him, as it does, the society of his own countrymen, an actual or ideal advantage, to which he is seldom insensible. Generally speaking, however, it may ultimately be as well for him, as for the community to which he attaches himself, that he should become speedily incorporated with the people of the soil: many emigrants bring with them prejudices and predilections which can only be rubbed away by a free intercourse with the natives of the country. By sitting down at once among them, they will more readily acquire an accurate knowledge of their political institutions, and learn to estimate the high privileges which these impart to them, and thus attaching themselves to their adopted country, not from mere sordid motives of interest, but also from feeling and principle, become not only *naturalized*, but also *nationalized*. I have met with but too many in this country, who have not advanced beyond the former. I must observe, also, that the European farmer and mechanic, are usually far behind the American in general and practical knowledge, as well as enterprise. You find in the working farmer of these states, a store of information, a dexterity in all the manual arts, and often a high tone of national feeling, to which you will hardly find a parallel amongst the same class elsewhere. His advice and assistance always freely given to those who seek it, will be found of infinite service to a stranger; it will often save him from many rash speculations, at the same time that it will dis-

pose him to see things in their true light, and to open his eyes and heart to all the substantial advantages that surround him."

Views of Society and Manners in America, in a series of Letters from that Country to a Friend in England during the years 1818, 1819, 1820. By an Englishwoman (I). 8vo.

The above as the reader will notice, was written two years ago, since which the settlement, as appears by the letters now published, has considerably increased, and for the time it has been established, is in a very flourishing state.

[*Note B, page 44.*]

The address of the worthy female, one of the Society of *Friends* to my brother, respecting the "Infidel wicked settlement at the Illinois," proceeded from that principle of fear for the interests of christianity, which an enlightened christian, by which I mean one who understands the principles, imbibes the spirit, and follows the example of the primitive christians, need not indulge. To all sincere christians who may have indulged similar fears, may be applied what the Psalmist remarks of certain pious persons of his day, who appear to have been placed in a very "infidel, wicked settlement;"—"There were they in great fear where no fear was." (Ps. liv. 5.) Infidelity, or unbelief in the divine mission of Christ; a rejection of those grand truths, essential to the salvation of a lost world, where the gospel can be read and examined, as it may easily be in the present enlightened age—enlightened, with respect to the means of instruction for the attainment of knowledge the most important,—is so inexcuseable, that I know not how any man, even if his capacity be below mediocrity, and more especially any man whose ca-

capacity is above mediocrity, can, remaining an unbeliever, rationally hope to escape the awful sentence pronounced by our Saviour:—" *He that believeth not the Son, shall not see light:—he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*" (John iii.) Passages as equally applicable to unbelievers of the present day, as to those of old, as the evidences of christianity are equally bright and convincing as in our Saviour's time, if not more so. We have no such gross prejudices to combat as the Jews had, as no persons are so stupid as to expect a temporal Messiah, to imitate those grand pests of society, who, in all ages, have ravaged the world—despotic kings, and wholesale murderers commonly called conquerors! And if we have not the evidence of sense, the personal presence of Christ, we have *a more sure word of prophecy*, not of a temporary nature, but more suitable to succeeding ages, even to the end of time,—the fulfilment of Divine predictions. Men who after reading the various relations of travellers of the first reputation, concerning the fall and present state of ancient states and cities, Babylon, Tyre, Egypt, &c., can reject the evidence of the truth of revelation arising from such a source, may be pronounced without breach of charity, wilfully blind. If it be said, there is no general rule without exceptions,—I allow it, but only so far as there may be exceptions to other important general rules: for instance, that justly called the *golden rule*, delivered by our Saviour in his sermon on the mount. But let it be seriously recollected, that the very word *exceptions* implies the generality of the rule, and that the man cannot be very wise, who endeavours to persuade himself, that he shall, in the great day of final account, be included in these exceptions. For myself, I

must profess, that after some acquaintance with several of our principal infidel writers, English and foreign, I have never met with any who dared meet the distinguishing evidences of christianity fairly; and that in general, the description of writers alluded to, have been men whose moral conduct has been so defective, as to afford just reason to apprehend they were not sincere inquirers after truth. The infidel public may safely be challenged to answer, not only the writings of Locke, Newton, Lardner, Paley, &c., but even some of our shilling or sixpenny pamphlets. Let any unbeliever exert his energies in refuting that admirable tract entitled—*An Answer to the Question, WHY ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN?* by the late Dr. Clarke of Boston, in America, of which there have been published numerous editions, but to which, if an answer has been written, I will thank any person to inform me, and where it can be procured. But so long as the enemies of revelation consider misrepresentation, arising from wilful ignorance, sneering, jesting, and ribaldry, lawful weapons to effect the purpose they have at heart—the destruction of christianity—I shall certainly suspect they do not possess that indispensable qualification in all inquiries concerning revelation,—*an honest and good heart*, and that of course they are not sincere in their inquiries; but let all such men take warning from the numerous declarations in scripture concerning the rejecters of the gospel, as they will most assuredly find, that with respect to threatnings, as well as promises, *it is impossible for God to lie!*

Should it be asked,—How is it that so many men of talents, and who may possess qualities, which may render them in different ways, and to a certain degree useful to the world and ornamental to the social circle; various

causes may be assigned. I must confine myself to a few. The principal reason is assigned by the divine author of Christianity:—*This is the condemnation; light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.*—The love of applause in favourite circles is assigned by the same authority as another reason. Our Saviour demanded of the Pharisees,—*how can ye believe who receive honour one of one another, and not the honour which cometh from God only!* They rejected our Saviour's doctrines because *they loved the praise of men, more than the praise of God.*—How often has *pride* determined men to reject truths the most important? The *doctrine of the cross*, although the brightest display of the *wisdom and power of God* to the world, is to the *carnal* man, that is the man whose belief and practice are determined by worldly motives, *foolishness*. The remark of Dr. Priestley on this subject, deserves the most serious attention of men, who are by their talents and learning, elevated above the rest of the world. "Learned men have "prejudices peculiar to themselves, and the very affectation of being free from vulgar notions, and of being wiser "than the rest of mankind, must indispose them to the admission of truth, if it should happen to be with the common people!"

Although if the opinions I have expressed be true, they want not the sanction of the learned, yet knowing the influence of names, I will in their support add two, who although men of very different opinions, are by their respective admirers, considered *masters in Israel*. The first is Dr. Johnson who, as his biographer Mr. Boswell informs us, remarked on this subject,—"*No honest man could be a deist*; for no man could be so after a "fair examination of the proofs of christianity. Hume

"owned to a clergyman, in the bishopric of Durham, *that he "had never read the New Testament with attention!"* Another example of the truth of Johnson's remark is the famous Thomas Paine, who in a work misnamed "the Age of Reason," but which is a disgrace to any man possessing his reason, at the very moment of pretending to criticise the bible, and of glorying in having destroyed its credit, acknowledged that "that he had not read it for several years!" This may, in part at least, account for the numerous misstatements and falsehoods which deform his pages. This work has been the more injurious to society, as thereby the author lost much of that fame he had justly acquired by his admirable, and popular political writings, but to which the world has since shewn a comparative indifference.

To Dr. Johnson's opinion I only add that of Mr. Belsham, who in his *Calm Inquiry*, &c., observes ;—"The Unitarians "acknowledge that the scriptures were written for the instruction of the illiterate as well as of the learned, and "they believe—that ALL *which is essential to doctrine or "practice is SUFFICIENTLY INTELLIGIBLE even to the "meanest capacity."*

From these premises I conclude, that there is little danger of the spread of that *absurdity of absurdities*—INFIDELITY, where it is not supported by more plausible reasons than are contained in the writings of its votaries ; but it is with pain, that I am obliged in justice to the subject to add, that its principal support has been the corrupt systems and lives of its professors.—Those ANTICHRISTIAN CHURCHES under whatever denomination, and in every country under heaven, which have been established by the civil magistrate :—THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE, which has displayed its brazen front *in the temple of God, exalting itself above all that is called God ;* robbed

the great head of the church of his peculiar prerogative, the sovereignty over conscience; and plundered countless millions of their rights and properties, thus turning the church into a *den of thieves*,—These ecclesiastical corruptions constitute a more formidable argument against christianity, although by no means an honest reason for rejecting it, than the writings of the whole infidel world united.*

* A modern divine gives us the following curious description of the Church of England.—“The governors of this society form a kind of aristocracy respecting the community at large, but each particular governor in his proper district is a sort of monarch, exercising his function both towards the inferior ministers and laity, according to the will of the supreme head of the church.”—*The English Liturgy a Form of Sound Words; a Sermon delivered in the Parish Churches of St. Benet, Gracechurch Street, &c.* By GEORGE GASKIN, D.D.

How any man, with the New Testament before him, could possibly call such an *aristocratical* and *monarchical* church, one “formed according to the will of the Supreme Head,” when he well knew that it was diametrically opposite to the letter and spirit of the most solemn, particular, and repeated directions of the Great Head of the Church on this subject:—“*Call no man your master on earth; one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren, &c.*”—I shall not stay to inquire; but it may amuse the reader just to observe how this clerical pluralist exercises “*his function towards the laity*,” and more especially as it relates to *tythes*:—that species of property which was first voluntarily given by the people for various benevolent purposes, but of which they were afterwards robbed by the clergy, who appropriated them to their own sole use. How they are sometimes raised, even in the present enlightened age, I lately discovered in a catalogue, at a sale of pawnbroker’s unredeemed pledges, where, amongst other names and descriptions of property, I read as follows:

“*Lots sold under a distress for tythes due to the Rev. Dr. Gaskin, Rector of the United Parishes of St. Benet, Gracechurch Street, of St. Leonard, Eastcheap, [and of St. Mary, Newington.]*”

Then follow eight lots of writing paper, silver table and tea spoons, &c.

“*The following sold under a distress for tythes due to the Rev. Mr. Parker, (son in law of Dr. Gaskin) Rector of St. Ethelburga.*”

Then follow five lots of yellow and mottled soap!

But as America is not disgraced with an established church, supported by penal laws, the work of statecraft and priestcraft united, infidelity has, in that country, lost

Whether the body of the clergy, who have for so many ages been supported by these and by other means scarcely less obnoxious, come nearer to the description of the primitive apostles and pastors for independence, disinterestedness and benevolence, or to that description predicted by one of them of those who should come after him,—*grievous wolves not sparing the flock*, I leave to the reader to determine.

Dr. Gaskin, I was informed, ranks amongst the clergy who have arrogated to themselves the epithet *evangelical*; but I have since been informed otherwise; and I am inclined to believe, as those do who best know him, that he is *not* an evangelical clergyman!

I cannot help expressing my surprise that my countrymen will not, on this subject, take a hint from that great and liberal minded statesman, the late Lord Chatham, at the commencement of the American war, when our debt and taxes were not *one fifth* of what they are at present. His lordship in a speech in the House of Lords, turning to the right reverend bench, exclaimed,—“Let the bishops beware of war; for should the people be “pressed for money, *they know where to look for it!*” It is a pity that amidst so much nonsense, with which the nation is pestered at our agricultural meetings, and in agricultural reports, and so much injustice as is proposed for relieving the public, by Mr. Webb Hall on the one side, Mr. Cobbett and others on the other, such as new corn laws, and breaking public faith, &c. ruining thousands by the reduction of interest of the national debt, our real resources should not even be even hinted at. Is there no patriot to be found in either House of the Legislature, following the excellent example of Mr. Hume respecting *state* abuses, who will recommend, “*An inquiry into the nature and amount of our church revenues?*” Would christianity suffer if a Bishop of Winchester, or a Bishop of Durham, had not 30 or £40,000 a year! or if our over-grown church revenues in England, and more especially in that still more oppressed country, Ireland, where the bishoprics are in general richer, and many thousands are wrung from a long oppressed and impoverished people, not unfrequently in places where little or no duty is performed, were inquired into? Let Britain look at the church reformation which has taken place in France, and is now going forward in Spain and Portugal, the abolition of tythes, and the resumption of the useless and hurtful revenues of the church, and blush at her *bat* and *mole-like* stupidity!

its chief support, and cannot, to any extensive degree, flourish. Let that favoured quarter of the globe carefully preserve her only establishment—LIBERTY AND EQUALITY, and her religious interests are safe. Christianity left to itself will, by its own internal excellence, and by the lives of its sincere professors, have *free course, and be glorified*.

The English settlement in the Illinois already affords an illustration of the truth of these sentiments. In the first stage of its infancy, reports, as it appears by the remonstrance and admonitions of the female *friend* at Philadelphia to my brother, have been industriously and widely circulated, of its being a “wicked infidel settlement;” where “a christian parent” could not “answer it to his God for “endangering the precious souls of his dear children!” Three years have scarcely passed since this solemn warning was given; and what is the present state of this “Infidel settlement?” The friends to Christianity have exerted themselves, and although without the assistance of *Priests*, or even *Reverends* of any denomination, two places within the distance of as many miles, have been erected for public worship; one on the moderate candid *Unitarian* plan,—I mean that which according to the only accurate import of the word includes in its communion, all christians who dissent from that contradiction in terms—“THREE divine PERSONS in ONE “GOD:”—The other for the members of the Episcopal Church of England, which in America, by losing its antichristian sting, has lost its principal deformities; and what deserves peculiar notice—the service in the latter is read by the very person who was supposed to have been the chief promoter of infidelity!—A third chapel is now erecting for the use of the Calvinistic baptists. These different denominations, with any others

which may hereafter appear, have, only to follow the example of their brethren throughout America ; to meet in civil society, as friends, perfectly equal as to political, civil, and religious rights, no one allowed to have any ascendancy over the other, christianity will then triumph, and infidelity will be ashamed to show its face.

To the excellent admonitions on the subject of religious and moral conduct with which my brother concludes his letters, I cannot help adding my ardent hopes, that as the English settlement appears to be increasing in prosperity, and to present an happy asylum for those, who from various circumstances, are induced or compelled to emigrate from their native country, the inhabitants will prove an example of that true religion and virtue, which constitute the only sure foundation and preserver of states and communities :—my wishes are equally ardent, that as christians, they would not only avoid the errors of anti-christian established churches, but of those which although professedly dissenting from them still retain a strong attachment to many of their follies. Primitive christianity, how seldom is it aspired after ! The unnecessary division of christians into clergy and laity ; the distinctions of dress, habits, and titles, so calculated to please the fancy of our grown babies in the christian church ; the objectionable manner in which christian pastors are too frequently ordained and supported :—these with other follies which might be mentioned, all innovations on the simplicity and purity of the primitive churches will at the Illinois, it is hoped, be avoided. Let the English seriously recollect, that in their native country priestcraft prevails, not only in the established church, but in different degrees amongst those who dissent from it, where I fear it is increasing ; and that those who are distinguished for their

attachment to *weak and beggarly elements*, are in general equally distinguished for their indifference to the grand principles of LIBERTY, for their servility to the ruling powers, and for their support of that ruinous system of war and corruption, which has so peculiarly disgraced the British nation for the past sixty years.—May the office of pastor of a christian church be no longer deemed a *trade*, but let every christian teacher aspire to the honour of being equally independent with the apostles and pastors of the primitive churches, who were chiefly if not wholly dependant on their own exertions in the pursuit of some honest calling. May all denominations, uniting with each other in the bonds of christian friendship, no longer consider their peculiar explanation of doctrines as necessary to christian communion. May their only grand essentials be, *sincerity in the search of truth, and honesty in practising it*. Thus may they, in the full enjoyment of political, civil, and religious liberty *go on unto perfection*.*

* That I may not be misunderstood, I beg leave to remark, that I intend no reflection on those who may have been educated solely with a view to the ministry, and of whose habits we cannot expect an alteration. It is an evil attending the present system, that while men of very moderate talents, and judging by their conduct, who have made no great advancement in the christian life, who possess a few superficial qualifications which captivate the ignorant and unthinking, are living in luxury, there are men of fine talents, and transcendant virtues, who are living in comparative poverty. The grand error is the mechanical transformation of youths into ministers at seminaries, instead of their being brought up to some trade or profession in which their independence might rest on themselves.

I have, on this subject, expressed myself more at large in the MEMOIRS OF ROBERT ROBINSON, prefixed to his Works. See also an excellent Sermon in his incomparable VILLAGE DISCOURSES, entitled, "*Any one who understands Christianity may teach it*." And another in the Posthumous volume of his works, entitled, "*The Corruptions of Christianity*."

[*Note C, page 46.*]

Mr. Cobbett's former calumnies respecting the English settlements in the Illinois were amply refuted by Mr. Birkbeck and my brother, in two pamphlets, published in 1819, and to neither of which, although he has alluded to a private letter, since written by the former, and inserted in a provincial paper, has he dared to reply. He has however, had the effrontery in a late *Register* (*July, 7th, 1821,*) not only to repeat those calumnies, but to invent others still more atrocious; and as the parties concerned are five thousand miles distant, I deem it my duty on the present occasion, to add a few observations to those of my brother, that the character of the calumniator may appear in its true colours, and that my countrymen may no longer be the dupes of a man who has so frequently deceived them.

This writer has in his rage against the settlements at the Illinois, not only shewn his usual disregard of truth and decency, but thrown off the common feelings of humanity. Yes!—This marble-hearted reprobate has impiously dared to reproach an affectionate,—a peculiarly warm-hearted father with the death of a favourite son. Addressing himself to Mr. Birkbeck, he states as follows:—“As to English farmers, yours, or any like yours, is the *“very worst spot* they can go to.” Of the falsehood of this assertion, the reader has before him demonstrative evidence. Then, alluding to Mr. William Hunt and his qualifications for farming, the writer adds:—“With great sorrow I heard “of his untimely end, from one of those terrible fevers that “never fail to haunt new settlements for years. One of “Mr. Flower's sons is *dead also*, in the bloom of life. “Now, had Mr. F. followed *my* advice given him at New “York; if he had purchased a farm or two on the Atlantic side, *this son would in all probability have been alive!*”

To this atrocious paragraph I reply:—*It is false* that “terrible fevers haunt the English settlements” more than is common in either England or America. I am well acquainted with some who were born, and had previous to their emigration, lived in one of the finest counties in England, Devonshire, who were not unfrequently subject to fevers in general, but to such “terrible fevers,” as had nearly terminated their earthly existence. These very persons have lately written me, that during a twelve-month’s residence near Albion, succeeding a long and fatiguing voyage and journey, they have been less subject to fevers, and have enjoyed better health than when breathing their native air. As to the climate in general, its healthy state has, after four years experience, been proved, by the evidence of persons, whose characters for veracity more particularly, are as superior to that of their calumniator, as light is to darkness.—*It is false* that Mr. W. Hunt was brought to an untimely end by “a terrible fever.” At the moment I am writing I have a gentleman at my elbow, who during his late residence at the Illinois was well acquainted with Mr. H. and with the circumstances attending his death; and he has authorised me to state:—That Mr. Hunt’s disorder was a common pleurisy, attended with but a slight degree of fever; that he was fast recovering; but as is not uncommon in other countries, not taking proper care of himself, and negligent in following medical advice, he had a relapse which terminated fatally.

It is false, that my amiable and excellent nephew *died also* in consequence of one of those “terrible fevers.” Being intimately acquainted with the circumstances of his case, from the very best authority I assure the reader, that his death was occasioned by a common com-

plaint in all countries, and to which young people are more peculiarly subject: a cold, caught on a journey, (it is not necessary to detail the particulars), which, without any alarming symptoms of fever, terminated in a decline, and as is frequently the case in such disorders, suddenly, when his parents and family were flattering themselves he had nearly recovered. Thus has Mr. Cobbett impiously represented an affecting visitation of Providence;—a visitation common to every spot on the habitable globe,—as a judgment inflicted on my brother for not following *his* advice, although he *forgot* to add, that this advice was enforced with a denunciation, clothed in his favourite phraseology, “I’ll be d——d if I do not write down Birkbeck and his “settlement.”*—Thus has he strove to transpierce the heart of a father, and to tear open a wound, which time, a flourishing situation, with those ample means of enjoyment with which the favour of providence has surrounded him, together with those “strong consolations,” which a true christian only can feel the force of, was healing; and I trust, that the same supports will enable him to triumph over the fiend whose deadly aim has been to send him a mourner to the grave.

Mr. C. warns my brother and his family “to retreat in time,” which if they do not, he dooms them for their lives “to pass their days principally amongst the fellers of “trees, and the swallowers of whiskey.” After the reader has attended to the evidence respecting the state of society at the English settlements, in the pamphlet before him, (I might refer him to additional respectable evidence) it is only necessary to warn Mr. C. in return, should he again cross the Atlantic, and take it into his head to reside at the Illinois, to be careful to leave his vicious habits of

* Flower’s Letters from the Illinois, 1819, p. 32.

swearing and *lying* behind him, as he will otherwise find not only English society, but even the society of "fellers of trees, and swallowers of whiskey" too humane, too civilized, too virtuous to be very fond of *his* company.

The *hypocrisy* of Mr. Cobbett, in his professions of respect for Mr. B. and my brother can only be equalled by his *falsehood*. His inhuman attack on the latter I have already noticed; and his eagerness in the same *Register*, to expose and misrepresent private matters with which the public have no concern, for the sole purpose of making mischief, must be too obvious to its readers to require farther notice. I might quote from a subsequent *Register*, the manner in which he has endeavoured to ridicule both my brother and Mr. B. but it is too contemptible for a reply.

Mr. Birkbeck, in the letter quoted by Cobbett observes, "I suppose you have seen Cobbett's attack on me, and "laughed at the ridiculous posture in which he has contrived to place me." On this Mr. C. indignantly demands—"Pray Sir, by what rule known amongst men, are you justified in imputing to me *an attack* on you. I addressed to "you two letters while I was in Long Island, dated in the "latter part of the year 1818:—now throughout the whole "of those letters *there is not to be found one single expression* "to warrant this charge of having made an attack on you; "from one end to the other I speak of you with the greatest "respect." Of the *sincerity* of these professions the reader will judge, by a short extract or two from the letters referred to. "It is of little consequence," observes Mr. C. "what wild schemes are formed by men who have pro- "perty enough to carry them back; but to invite men to go "to the Illinois, with a few score of pounds in their poc- "kets, and to tell them that they can become farmers with "those pounds, appears to me to admit of no other apology



“than an unequivocal acknowledgment that the *author is*
 “MAD! Yet your fifteenth letter from the Illinois really
 “contains such an invitation. This letter is manifestly
 “addressed to an *imaginary* person, it is clear that the cor-
 “respondent is a *feigned* or *supposed* being. It is, I am
 “sorry to say, a mere trap to catch poor creatures with a
 “few pounds in their pockets.” Mr. Birkbeck in reply,
 after stating that his letter was not addressed to an “ima-
 “ginary person,” but to one with whose circumstances he
 was intimately acquainted, a relation by marriage, adds :—
 “You have posted me over England and America as *mad*,
 “as a *simpleton*, and a *boaster*, and in one or two instances
 “as *something worse*. *So great a liberty with truth you say,*
 “*never was taken by any mortal being* ; and having made the
 “discovery, you are in great haste to conclude your letter
 “to me, *that your son William might take it to England with*
 “*him, and publish it there six months before I could hear of*
 “*it!*”—So much for Mr. Cobbett’s *sincerity* in his high
 professions of respect for Mr. B. his *veracity* in declaring
 he made “no attack on him,” and that his letter, “*was*
 “*not written to be circulated in Europe!*” It is a pity that
 he did not adduce his ever-memorable denunciation against
 Mr. B. and his settlement uttered a short time before he
 wrote his letters, as an additional proof of his *sincerity* and
veracity! *

The *conceit* of this writer is as intolerable as his other
 vicious qualities. Speaking of the House of Commons, he
 thus expresses himself :—“I am well aware of all the feel-
 “ings that are at work in that assembly with regard to me
 “and my writings. I have not mock modesty enough, to
 “pretend not to perceive the power that I have in the

* Cobbett’s Register, July 7, 1821. Birkbeck’s Letters, printed for
 Ridgway, 1819, second edition.

“country ; and it is out of the power of that assembly to
“disguise from me that they are well aware of the extent of
“that power. Neither am I ignorant of the power that I
“have with regard to *their* actions, and of the great reluct-
“ance that they have to suffer the public to perceive that
“they feel the effects of any such power. I manage my
“matters adroitly : but the power I have, and the power
“I will have ; and this I repeat it, the public know full as
“well as I do ; and I only state the facts here in order to
“let those who grudge me the power know, that the pos-
“session of it gives me great satisfaction.” How *adroitly*
this bankrupt in fortunes and character has “managed his
“matters,” the *London Gazette* and our courts of justice
have recently afforded ample evidence ; and should he
profess modesty, that it will be “mock modesty,” no man
will dispute : as to the rest of the paragraph, surely the
ravings of the poor bedlamite, with his crown of straw,
brandishing his straw scepter, and fancying himself
a king, appears rationality itself compared with this dis-
play of bloated pride and intoxicated vanity ! What
particular *power* this writer possesses over the coun-
try, or over parliament, I know not : that he may im-
pose upon some people by his acknowledged talents as a
writer, whose style is so well calculated for the lower
classes more particularly, and by his confident assertions,
I do not deny ; but in justice to Mr. C. I must observe,
that I do not believe his powers for wickedness are so gi-
gantic as he has laboured to persuade us they are. How
often has he boasted of his power at any time totally to
ruin the Bank of England by his favourite project of a ge-
neral forgery of bank notes ; and which he could easily
put in execution at any time ; but notwithstanding he
proves his *good wishes* on the subject, he has not had that

confidence in his own most marvellous powers, as to risk his neck in the acquisition of that *exaltation*, which the attempt to put such a project in execution would most assuredly be his reward !

Mr. Birkbeck has drawn a most correct miniature likeness of his grand enemy, in describing him as a man,—I copy the sentence as printed by Mr. C.—“*KNOWN to be wholly indifferent to truth.*” This description is so terribly galling as to provoke him to give additional proof of its justice. How numerous are the proofs,—how vast the evidence which might be collected from his writings ! How many of the most useful and ornamental characters, and of the greatest and best men in the political, social, and literary world has he not libelled ! It is not only Birkbeck, and Flower, but Waithman, Burdett,*

* In Mr. C.'s treatment of Sir Francis Burdett, *INGRATITUDE* seems the crowning vice. The benevolent and patriotic baronet, deceived by him as many others have been, lent him a large sum of money, which just as he was setting out for America he declined paying, under the pretext that as government had by their oppressive measures injured him, he did not consider himself bound to discharge his debts till it suited his convenience ! Sir Francis, alluding to this letter, remarked, that he did not know whether such a principle had ever before been acted upon, but he believed it was the first time it had ever been openly professed ! As those letters are I find, very imperfectly recollected by many of Mr. C.'s readers, if he will reprint them in his *Weekly Register*, they will consider it as a favour.

Mr. C. commenced his notice of the worthy baronet by reviling him, and all men of his principles, in his usual style he afterwards veered about to the opposite point of the compass, and panegyricised him in the highest terms ; but although he had partly gained his ends, finding that he could not completely transform Sir Francis into one of his tools, and by his means, accomplish his darling, but uniformly defeated project, of procuring a seat in the House of Commons, he in his rage, and under that prophetic impulse with which “The angel he so long has served,” not unfrequently inspires him, pledged himself that in the course of a few months he would so expose the baronet, as to hurry him to his fate :—

and Fox, Priestley, Franklin, Locke, and Addison, with many others whom this general libeller has calumniated. But to wade through his innumerable pages, and to collect the numberless proofs of the truth of this statement would be a more Herculean task than that of cleansing the Augean stable. To the number of his *Register* already quoted I must confine myself: and indeed *that* may be produced as a fair specimen of many others. Many years since, and early in his political career, he poured forth his abuse on Dr. Franklin; the fit has lately revisited him; and it has happened to him, to use the language of St. Peter, when describing similar characters of his time, *according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again*. Speaking of this friend of his country, and of the world, Mr. C. observes:—"Dr. Franklin's maxims are childish, "if not trivial; a still greater number of them are false, "*the whole tenor of them tends to evil*, for it constantly aims "at strengthening selfishness, and at enfeebling generosity."—Yes reader! such is the description of the luminous pages of this illustrious American philosopher, statesman, and patriot, and which abound equally with lessons of philanthropy and prudence, enforced by his own example, and which have instructed, improved, and adorned, not only his own country, but almost every civilized spot on the habitable globe.

But although there is much more offensive matter in the *Register* I have quoted, I must draw to a close. Mr. C. on some subjects, shews considerable talents and industry, and he might have been useful to society, had he confined himself to his peculiar forte,—ferretting out

That of committing suicide, and of being buried in a cross road, with a stake driven through his body! If Dr. Young's sentiment—"He that's ungrateful has no crimes but ONE" be correct, Mr. C.'s character appears to have reached its climax.

public abuses, and making every class understand their nature. It is indeed to be lamented how little he feels himself, what he has made others feel. But, as there is no system, men nor measures, but he has equally panegyrised and reviled, as it has suited his caprice, or weathercock opinions; his own conduct has, in a great degree, destroyed the effects of the best parts of his writings.—But as he has lately turned his attention to that best of books,—the bible,—which he has frequently sneered at, and reviled the successful exertions of those who have extended its circulation;—as his prolific pen has lately produced SERMONS, in which he has displayed his usual energies, I will not despair of him; and I hope he will take in good part my friendly and concluding hints. I will help him to one or two subjects for his succeeding sermons. The first shall be—THE SIN AND DANGER OF PROFANE SWEARING, from *Exodus* xx. 7. *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.* The other, GOD'S ABHORRENCE OF FALSEHOOD, from *Prov.* xii. 22. *Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord.* No man is capable of doing these subjects more ample justice; and I will promise him that, as I have distributed some of his writings, I will so exert myself respecting these proposed sermons, as that he made add to his recent boastings of their extensive sale. It is impossible that in reading and studying his Bible, he can prevent it from *flying in his face*, and I most sincerely hope his reflections will terminate in his repentance and reformation: that he may no longer remain in the *gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity*; but that it may be his fervent prayer to God,—*That the thoughts of his heart may be forgiven him.*

FINIS.

NOTES TO "LETTERS FROM THE ILLINOIS," &c.

—:0:—

- (a) page iv, "My brother." This preface was written by Benjamin Flower, younger brother of the author of the Letters, and uncle to George Flower. He was born in 1775, and became a Radical editor and writer. He never migrated to America.
- (b) page 9, "Albion." Mr. Flower had resided at Albion nearly two years when these Letters were written.
- (c) page 16, "A place for education." During the year that this Letter was written, a log structure was built at Albion, which served both as school-house and church-building. Prayers were said in it every Sunday, and a sermon read from some English divine. The services were attended alike by Church of England followers, Quakers, and Unitarians.
- (d) page 16, "Captain Burke." Captain Jeremiah Birk had purchased land in the Illinois country before the coming of the English colonies. When the settlers began to come in numbers, he sold out and moved across the Mississippi. He represents the crude and vigorous frontiersmen who led the van in the onward march of civilization.
- (e) page 19, "Park House." This was the residence of the Flower family at Albion. Some travellers describe it as a finer house than the Birkbeck mansion at Wanborough.
- (f) page 24, "In the ranks of heresy." This paragraph is one of the few indications of the animosity existing between the Flower and the Birkbeck factions in Illinois. It was to the interests of all to conceal the schism.

- (g) page 27, "My dear son William." William, youngest son of Richard Flower, died in Kentucky during the year the family tarried there.
- (h) page 29, "About your Queen." A reference to the attempt of George III. to divorce Queen Charlotte.
- (i) page 37, "One hundred bushels per acre." This rose-coloured prediction was scarcely realized. The average yield in this part of Illinois has rarely been above thirty bushels to the acre.
- (j) page 51, "As C. F., &c." Cobbett, Fearon, and others. Cobbett's animosity has been described in the Introduction. Fearon was a London physician who was sent to America to select a place of residence for a proposed English colony. In 1818 he published "Narrative of 5,000 Miles through the Eastern and Western States of America." It contained many strictures on the country and people.
- (l) page 58, "By an Englishwoman." Miss Frances Wright, a native of Scotland, came to America in 1812, and embarked in various philanthropic schemes, including a colony of free negroes in Tennessee. As authoress, lecturer, and reformer, she lived a varied and picturesque life.

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[NOTE BY PUBLISHERS.—*In reprinting the foregoing three Tracts, we have followed the originals verbatim et literatim, both as regards punctuation, style, as well as the errors of spelling, &c.*]

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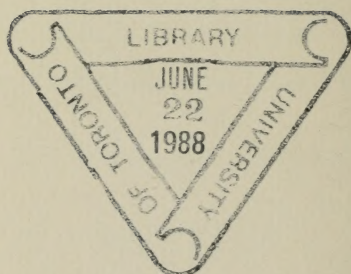
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